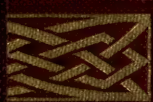
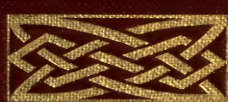


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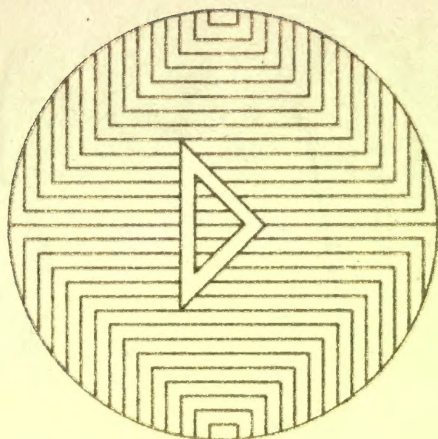
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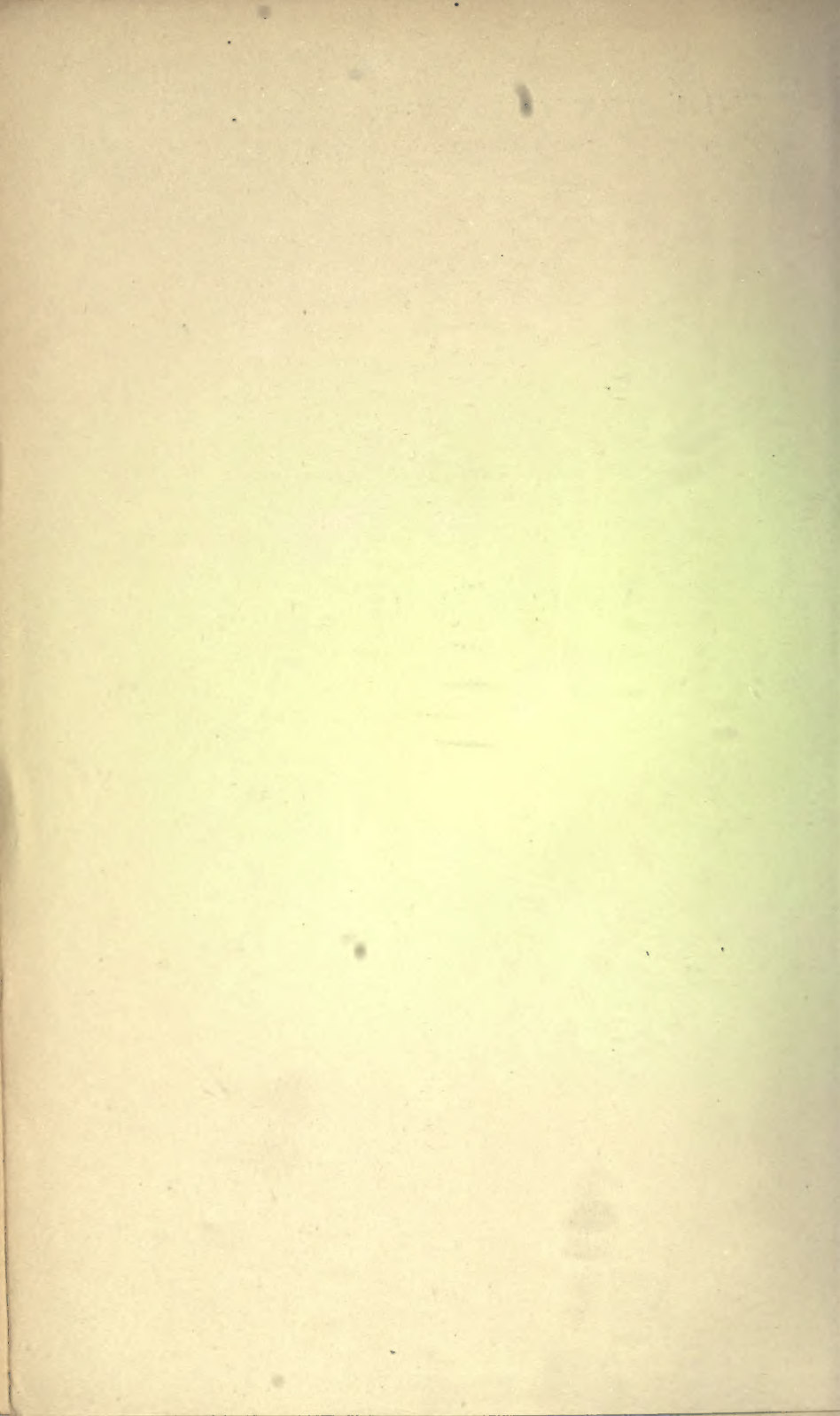


THE ANTIQUARY'S BOOKS

GENERAL EDITOR: J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.

ENGLISH SEALS













THE GREAT SEAL OF H.M. KING EDWARD VII



# ENGLISH SEALS

BY

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RECTOR OF WHITCHURCH

WITH NINETY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.

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## PREFACE

THE worker among early muniments will hitherto have searched in vain for any guide to the types used upon the different classes of seals he meets with day by day in the course of his valuable and interesting labours. He will find little, save in scattered papers in Transactions of learned societies, to tell him of devices, legends, or other inscriptions, and he is thus unable to detect a forged seal, and is at a loss how to date a document from the seal alone. The student of costume, arms, and armour has possibly not sufficiently realized the valuable aid seals may give him. The herald and genealogist may scarcely have used them as he ought; for early heraldry, for hints of matrimonial alliances, these contemporary evidences are invaluable. And it is primarily for students of these and kindred matters that this book is written. Should it have the effect of drawing attention to these original and beautiful works of art, it will have served its purpose, especially if it should aid in any way our modern workers in metal.

Although the beauty of English-cut seals far surpassed those of the Continent in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, this country was for a long time considerably behind France and Germany in the attention given to the history and display of this art.

The earliest separate treatise the writer has met with is



a rare quarto of four pages, issued officially by the order of Parliament, printed by Edward Husbands, November 11, 1643. It is entitled "A declaration and ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament; touching the Great Seale of England and that the said Seale is to be put into the hands and custody of such Commissioners as are herein named by both Houses of Parliament."

In the same year the famous Parliamentary lawyer, William Prynne, brought out a quarto pamphlet of thirty-two pages, called "The Openinge of the Great Seale of England," in which the history of England's seal is duly set out, chiefly on the authority of Selden, followed by an excellent piece of special pleading proving the right of the Parliament to cause a new seal to be made.

"A Dissertation on the Antiquity and Use of Seals in England," by John Lewis, was printed in 1740. This is a very rare quarto of thirty-one pages; it is curiously illustrated.

Dr. Pegge furnished the Society of Antiquaries with a paper, "On the Matrices of English Seals," in 1779 ("Archæologia" V, 346-56); and Sir Henry Ellis, in 1817, took a decided step in advance in his paper, "On the History and Use of Seals in England" ("Archæologia," XVIII, 12-20).

Engravings of a few seals are given in the earlier volumes of the "Vetusta Monumenta" in the eighteenth century, whilst individual seals or small groups of seals are often described, and occasionally drawn, in the "Archæologia" and in the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries" throughout the nineteenth century.

A considerable impetus was given to the study of seals,



as well as to other branches of archæology, in the year 1845, when both the Royal Archæological Institute and the British Archæological Association were founded, and began the issue of their respective journals. The indices prove what a large share of attention has been bestowed by the publications of both societies on seals from that time to the present. The last half of the nineteenth century has seen the foundation of provincial antiquarian associations in almost every English county, and not one of them has altogether neglected this particular study.

The chief papers of interest pertaining to particular branches of the subject are named at the end of each section. Here it must suffice to notice one or two treatises or essays of a more general character.

The paper on matrices of medieval seals, printed in "Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries" (2nd Ser. IX, 36-50), is of considerable value. In 1887 Mr. Wyon's great work on "England's Royal Seals" was issued, and in the same year Mr. W. H. St. John Hope put forth a thorough paper on those of English bishops ("Pro. Soc. of Antiq.", 2nd Ser. XI, 271-306); this gave a great impetus to their study. Mr. Hope pointed out that, as a class, those of bishops are of much general value as indicating the date of other-classes, and enabling us to judge of the period by the style of lettering.

The official catalogue of the national collection at the British Museum, by Dr. W. de G. Birch, is the largest and most important general contribution to the subject. The first three volumes relate to England. The first (1887) deals with royal, ecclesiastical, and monastic seals; while the next two (1892, 1894) chiefly relate to equestrian and heraldic groups.



In 1895 two quarto volumes of the late Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt and Mr. W. H. St. John Hope were published on "Corporation Plate and Insignia." Every borough seal is herein described and a large number illustrated.

Mr. Gale Pedrick brought out a well-illustrated volume on "Borough Seals of the Gothic Period," in 1902, selected on account of their artistic value. The instances figured are Alnwick, Appleby, Ashburton, Barnstaple, Basingstoke, Bedford, Berwick-on-Tweed, Beverley, Boston, Bridgnorth, Bridgwater, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Colchester, Congleton, Dorchester, Dover, Droitwich, Faversham, Folkestone, Gloucester, Grimsby, Hartlepool, Hastings, Helston, Hereford, Hythe, Ipswich, Kingston-upon-Hull, Leeds, Lincoln, London, Lydd, Lyme Regis, Lymington, Lynn Regis, Melcombe Regis, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Newport, Norwich, Oswestry, Oxford, Pevensey, Pontefract, Poole, Reading, Rochester, Rye, Salisbury, Sandwich, Shrewsbury, Southampton, Stafford, Stamford, Tenterden, Torrington, Twynham, Wallingford, Walsall, Warwick, Wenlock, Wilton, Winchelsea, Windsor, Worcester, Yarmouth, Yeovil, and York.

The writer wishes to thank all who have aided him by their kindly advice, but principally the artist, Mrs. Constance Canning, by whose delicate pencil drawings this book is illustrated, and by whose faithful transcripts, rivalling and excelling photographic processes, such satisfactory results have been possible.

Dr. Cox, the general editor of this series, deserves the writer's warmest thanks for kindly suggestions and ever-ready help, but chiefly for the chapter he has so ably contributed, entitled "The Story of the Great Seal." Thanks



## PREFACE

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are also due to the Earl of Warwick, the Executive of the Warwick Museum for the loan of original seals and casts, and the many friends who have taken an interest in the volume.

All human work is liable to error: these pages cannot expect to be exempt, and the writer will sincerely thank any one who points out to him a misstatement; but at the same time he wishes to say that he has been careful to ensure accuracy as far as possible.

WHITCHURCH RECTORY,  
STRATFORD-ON-AVON

*December, 1905*









CYLINDER SEAL OF KHASHKHAMER  
(British Museum)

# ENGLISH SEALS

## INTRODUCTORY

**I**N the ancient civilizations of Assyria and Egypt the use of seals commenced, and this at a time almost, if not quite, coeval with the dawn of history. These ancient peoples found the need of some symbol, by which the identity of its owner could be proved and his rights protected. Such a symbol was necessary, not only before, but even after the invention of written documents, since the forgery of a name has ever been a comparatively easy task; while to forge a symbol might require far more skill. All the civilized nations of the ancient world followed up this line of reasoning, and seals were commonly used, not only in Egypt and Assyria, but in Greece and Rome also. Although these varied peoples



agreed with each other in theory, yet in practice each nation developed for itself a national type, and it will be worth our while to glance at some of their characteristics before we are able to gauge the artistic position in the long series our own beautiful seals hold.

The cylinder seals of Accadia, Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt are possibly the earliest in the field. These were rolled on the plastic clay of which their documents were composed, and afterwards subjected to the action of heat, and thus rendered far more permanent than anything of our own can expect to be; in this they have the advantage. At the same time their seals present to us the most fascinating forms. They were engraved with designs sunk in the surface of cylinders made of various materials, but chiefly of stone, such as marble, jasper, rock crystal, agate, steatite, emerald, and amethyst, and were frequently pierced for suspension about the neck of their owner. Their use extended over a period of about 3500 years, from 4000 B.C. to the conquest of Babylon, B.C. 538.

In such a series the designs offer great variety of subject and show much excellent and artistic workmanship. In the more archaic we find the figure of the owner, and perhaps that of his father also, while the image or symbol of his personal god is often added, together with the deity's name. The example figured at the head of this chapter shows Ur-Gur being led into the presence of Sin, the moon god. It is inscribed with the name of Khashkhamer, viceroy of the city of Iskkun-Sin, and has an address to the king. In all art there is a tendency to pass from archaic simplicity to greater elaboration, and the later cylinder seals become crowded with emblems and figures, scenes, etc., taken from the



legendary life of the gods and goddesses, combats between men and animals, acts of adoration, and many other such subjects, which it would be out of place even to mention in such a book as the present.

While the Assyrians were using their cylinders in the then further east, the Egyptian people gradually disused them, and adopted an entirely different form, which they derived from the sacred beetle, the *Attacus sacer* Linn. of scientists. The beetle was itself sacred to the sun and Pthah, and was also recognized as an emblem of the world and Hor-Hat. Possibly for one or more of these reasons it lent a sacred character to the document it attested, as the presence of the sacred sign of the cross did, affixed to the signatures of witnesses in our own Saxon "*land books*," an idea which survived all through the Middle Ages in England. Scarab seals are made of all kinds of material, but have invariably on the lower surface a flat space, upon which is cut the name and titles of the owner. Among the earliest contemporary scarabs at present known are those of Nebka, a sovereign of the third dynasty, who commenced to rule *circa* 4212 B.C.

The scarab form of seal was not, however, confined to Egypt. The Phoenicians and Carthaginians copied it more or less correctly, and it was used, moreover, by those Greeks who for purposes of commerce took up their residence in Egypt; and from these several nations it spread to the great art workers of the time, the Etruscans, among whom it found a congenial home, and obtained a stronger hold than among the more daintily cultured



ARCHAIC ETRUSCAN  
SCARAB  
(British Museum)



Greeks, who saw small merit either in the beetle shape or the outlandish designs, and in time the Etruscans themselves discarded the scarab for the same reason. They were the great gem-engravers of the time, and took their models chiefly from Greek sources. The place of the scarab was thus taken by new forms. The oldest of these were lentilocular or bean-shaped gems, but the



LENTILOCLULAR GEM  
(British Museum)

typical shape was occasionally modified by the form of the pebble chosen. Thus seals more truly glandular than lentilocular occur. The size of the gem varies considerably. Some were evidently set in finger-rings and others made fast to a swivel for suspension; but

whatever their form their object was primarily utilitarian, though often extremely artistic also.

"Their aim was attained if they expressed, by a symbol or device, the identity of the owner, whenever this had to be established for the many purposes of trade and private life in which seals were employed previous to the general introduction of writing."<sup>1</sup> After the fourth century B.C. a change took place, and the stone was cut thin and into an oval form, while a design was sunk in its face. Such gems were set in rings as a rule, and the favourite stone was the sard, but beryl, amethyst, and garnet were also used. The workmanship of these later seals is very delicate, and the proportion and composition fine. The subjects chosen are generally mythological,

<sup>1</sup> "Brit. Mus. Cat. of Gems," p. 5.



heroical, or legendary, a wide field and worthily worked. It is from this class that our kings and ecclesiastics obtained the antiques inserted by them in their own seals and counter seals. Set in such a manner these antique gems are found as early as the reign of Eadgar, who used, in common with Louis Debonnaire and Charles the Simple, an antique portrait bust, to which a new and appropriate inscription was added.

As the Grecian people had used seals, so they were copied in this, as in much else, by the Romans. It will be sufficient to figure here a seal of the time of Caracalla representing Philip and Otacilia and their son Philip, with Jupiter Serapis and a dedication by the Breisean mystery at Smyrna. The original in bronze is in the British Museum.



BRONZE SEAL OF PHILIP AND OTACILIA  
(British Museum)

From the foregoing we have seen that the use of the seal to attest a document or prove identity has existed from very early times. It is now our business to trace its use and development in our own islands.

According to Professor Skeat, the word seal is derived from the Latin *sigilla*, itself derived from *signum*, a mark or sign, and hence the mark made by the device upon ring or seal. In modern English by a seal is understood an impression in wax or other material made by



a matrix or stamp. It will be convenient to speak of these matrices in this place.

The seals in England were made by impressing upon softened wax a device or devices by means of a mould or matrix. Such a mould was formed of necessity of a durable material, and for this purpose, in the case of large seals, latten, bronze, or gilded copper was commonly employed. In the case of smaller seals, or of seals of wealthy individuals or corporations, the more precious metal silver was frequently in request, and yet more rarely gold. In some early examples lead was used, but its softness rendered it far from common, or indeed sufficiently durable. Yet more recent is the use of steel. Of non-metallic materials the most beautiful substance employed was ivory, obtained largely from the tusks of the morse or walrus; and matrices of this material may be found in most collections.

The large seals of dignity were double—that is, had two dies, which were as a rule flat circular disks of metal, so made that when pressure was applied no inaccuracy in the relative positions of the obverse and reverse might occur. These dies were made with pierced loops or handles, through which sticks could be inserted, and thus guide the operator. These pegs were sometimes of metal and attached permanently to the lower die.

Single seals, if of large size, had a loop ridge or handle at the back, which might conveniently be grasped by the official in the act of sealing. Small seals have usually the back raised in a conical manner, six-sided in plan, and terminating in a triple loop for suspension to the person of its owner. The sides of these cones are occasionally, though rarely, ornamented. A seal of Hythe has, for



instance, engravings of dragons and unicorns upon the plane surfaces of the conical back. In later times small seals were fixed for convenience in handles of wood or ivory.

On the other hand, matrices of elaborate character are not unknown; such is the beautiful matrix of the seal of Boxgrove Priory, in Sussex, combined in a single design by considerable mechanical ingenuity. Another is described and figured by the late Evelyn Shirley in "*Archæologia*," vol. XXIX. p. 405. In the entire state the matrix of this remarkable example gives an impress of a shield bearing the arms of Thomas de Prayers and a legend about them; but by means of an internal screw worked by the handle, the centre may be projected and an impression taken independently of the legend. Again, the centre may be screwed off, and a small secretum appears enclosed within the first. Upon the exterior of the two former portions a small star is engraved, answering to the star at the commencement of the legend, and serving to show at once the points where the parts fit, the screws terminate, and also pointing out the upper part of the circle when an impression is taken.

After the mould, matrix, or stamp for making the impression, it is needful to describe briefly the material upon which the impression was made. In all the earlier seals this material was pure beeswax: and so excellent was its quality that specimens remain almost undamaged of the very earliest and largest seals. In the finer examples, the wax was only just suited to the size and shape of the seal; in the smaller seals there was a more or less globular margin, perhaps formed and retained to protect the device which lay below its surface. This wax was



either left its natural colour, a kind of yellowish brown, or was stained with colouring matter. In this way, green, red, dark brown, or nearly black seals, as well as very beautiful white ones, are to be found. The wax flam has generally a flattened disk, but examples are extant of even early seals, notably those of Bolton Priory, in which the wax forms an almost globular ball. In the earlier examples, when no counter-seal or reverse is to be found, the wax is usually more or less rounded. From a Durham account roll for the year 1330 it appears that *terbentyn* (turpentine) was used in making wax for the Prior's seal, and that 12d. was paid for it. So, too, in 1336 the bursar paid 42s. for green wax to the under-sheriff of York and 40s. to the under-sheriff of Northumberland.

If the seals of the seventeenth century are lightly drawn in but slight relief, the wax on which the impression was placed is almost invariably clumsy. Seal after seal is but a ball-like mass of wax, on which the impression is so carelessly made that the device of the owner of the seal can rarely be distinguished—markedly different from the small, carefully-finished wax flams of the earlier periods. Perhaps it mattered little, the law was fast losing sense of individuality, and was beginning to consider the impersonal wax and not the honourable device “the very act and deed” of the signatory.

This was partly brought about by the use of Spanish wax or sealing-wax in place of the ancient and more durable beeswax. This new fabrication was used in London as early as the middle of the sixteenth century. An old recipe for its manufacture is as follows:—“Receipt for red Spanish wax.—Take beautiful clear resin, the whitest



you can procure, and melt it over a slow charcoal fire. When melted, take from the fire, and for every pound of resin add two ounces of cinnabar pounded very fine, stirring it about; then let the whole cool, or pour it into cold water. For black wax, add lampblack; for blue, smalt; for white, whitelead; for yellow, orpiment. If turpentine is used in place of resin, the wax is harder, and the turpentine can be made any colour at the fancy of the maker."

The worst feature of the new wax is its brittle nature; but this, instead of bringing in, as might have been hoped, a reactionary movement, has practically driven seals out of use, since a mere piece of stamped paper, which is really no seal at all, is in general request. The object gained by the seal has now been transferred to the particular spot on the paper to be attested, upon which the coloured disk is placed. The only object of the disk is to indicate the spot to be touched by the finger of the signatory. No doubt this is easy, economical, and practically sufficient; but seal-engraving is no more the art it was.

The attachment of the seal to the document sealed was a matter of no slight importance, since this had to be carried out in such a manner that it was impossible to remove the seal and substitute another.

There were three methods of suspending these seals—the more artistic by a cord or bobbin of woven or plaited thread passing through the centre of the seal, and affixed to the document by two or more holes. Such cords of silk, thread, or stuff are of various colours—purple, golden, yellow, red, or green, and sometimes variegated or woven in different coloured threads. The bobbins are sometimes



hollow and made of green velvet or taffeta. The lower portion, that beneath the seal, is usually unravelled. The



second method is to cut a slit in the deed and through it pass a strip of parchment, which is again slit at right angles to that in the deed. The ends of the strap are passed once or twice through this slit, thus making a knot, which serves to hold the seal securely, and prevents its removal by a hot knife-blade—a method of

forgery not unknown to the medieval mind.

The third system is very rare. The document is cut with a knife, the wax applied over the incision, and the seal, as it were, riveted through the paper, the bulk of the seal and its impression appearing upon the *recto* of the document, the remainder of the wax fastening down the cut tags of parchment on the *dorso*. It is in this method that some of the earliest known seals are affixed, as, for instance, that of Offa.

Care was taken to preserve the seal; and the Great Seals of England and other important seals of dignity were kept in bags of silk. A bag of this description encloses the seal attached to the foundation charter of Hurley Priory, Bucks, A.D. 1086, and now preserved among the muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. The seal is that of Geoffrey de Mandeville the elder, and is enclosed in a bag of contemporary or nearly contemporary date, made of silk taffeta of a



terra-cotta colour, woven with peacocks in blue and gold. There are also a number of very beautiful bags of this description containing seals attached to the fine series of charters of Nuneaton Abbey, recently acquired by the British Museum.

A coarser but useful method of preservation is a protection in the form of a ring, projecting beyond the surface of the seal, and formed of plaited rushes. In yet later times seals were enclosed in circular cases of tin, or folded in the document itself within a case covered with stamped leather. The case in early examples was itself circular, a little larger than the seal, and covered with leather, plain or decorated, as the case might be, and secured by leather thongs. In the case of later deeds, which are usually of far greater size, the case was considerably longer, sometimes several feet in length, and constructed with a globular excrescence in front to fit and contain the seal. In such documents as grants of arms, etc., when more than one seal was required, there were projections to correspond. The Heralds' College sometimes sent out their seals enclosed in brass boxes exactly fitting them.

The seals of private persons were preserved more roughly; sometimes flax was twisted round the seal, sometimes the leaf of a tree sufficed, or even a small piece of linen, while in the seventeenth century it was usual to cover the seal with paper before an impression was made. Some of the finer great seals of the barons and bishops are beautifully varnished, and this no doubt contributes greatly to their admirable preservation. While upon the subject of preservation, it is as well to remember that when once a seal is cracked or broken it is very liable to further damage, if not to complete loss. Such damage



can be repaired, and in case of early or beautiful seals it should be done. Now and then the student meets with seals rapidly disintegrating to flakes. In this case the nature of the wax has been destroyed, and it is almost impossible to make any satisfactory repair.

Madox, in his celebrated "Formulare" (p. 287), tells us that when it happened that a man had not his seal in readiness or readily accessible, he would sometimes cause the seal of another to be affixed; or if his own seal were not well known, for better security, or even for confirmation, he would use both his own and another's seal. It not infrequently happened that a single seal did duty for more than one person, and it was not till towards the end of the medieval period that witnesses as a rule placed their seal to the document. When this, however, was done, a certain rule was followed: either the seal of the highest in rank was first affixed, and so on in diminishing order, or seals were affixed as the names occurred in the deed; but sometimes there is an important difference, by which the most honoured of the witnesses took the central position for his seal.

As an illustration of the remarks of Madox, his extracts from the charters of Salisbury Rolls series may be given.

Philip de Erticumb, chaplain, in a charter of acknowledgment that the chapel of Wambroe belongs to the prebend of Chardstock (dated October, 1215 and 1220), says, "Because I have no seal of my own, the abbot and convent of Milton have at my request lent me their seal, which I have affixed to this present writing" (No. CI.).

And in 1228 the authenticity of a charter of assent by

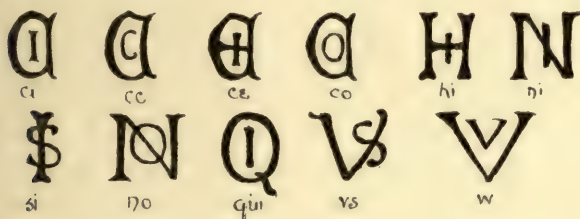


the prior and convent of Noyon (in Normandy) was doubted, because the seal was unknown (No. CLXXV.).

It may be convenient to say something of the paleography of the legends and inscriptions on seals, since what is said holds good of all varieties at all times. Lettering is used for two purposes, for an inscription or legend cut round the margin, or in certain cases for mottoes, words or letters which are properly part of the composition of the device. The lettering used groups itself naturally into periods, and the following are tolerably clearly marked :—

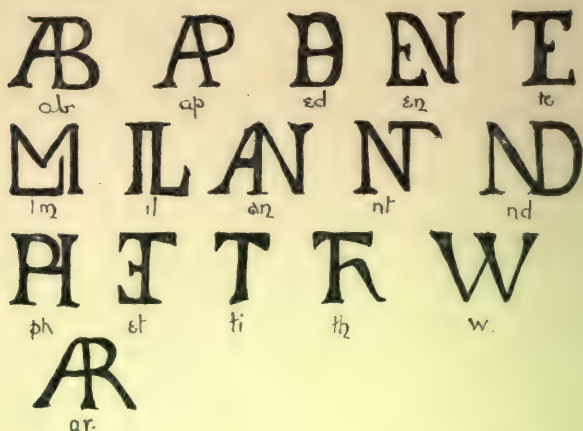
1. Early Romanesque or Saxon	.	before 1070
2. Late Romanesque or Norman	.	1070-1170
3. Early Lombardic . . .	.	1170-1200
4. Late Lombardic . . .	.	1200-1350
5. Gothic Majuscules . . .	.	1350-1425
6. Gothic Minuscules . . .	.	1425-1500
7. Renaissance . . .	.	1500—

The work of spacing the letters of the legend is often faulty, so that two different devices are found in use to economise space, viz. that of including one letter within another and that of uniting two letters in a single symbol; of the former, the following occur :—

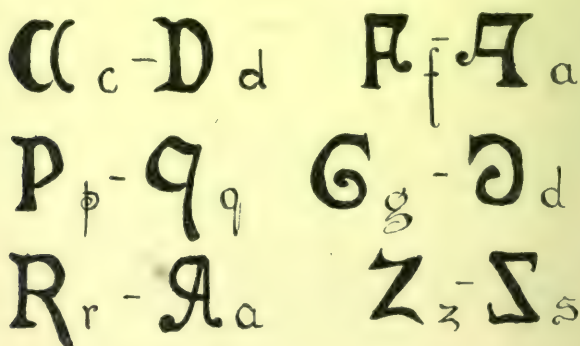




Of the latter—



The ignorance of the engraver also led at times to letters being used for their corresponding opposites. Thus in Lombardic script the following errors often occur :—



Apart from these methods of counteracting faulty spacing, a species of medieval shorthand common to all



records is constantly found. The more common of these abbreviations are as follows :—

ā	ḃ	€	Ð	f	q
an am	ber bre	crim con	cler de	ter tre	ger gre
h	k	t	m̄	n̄	ō
her hon	ker kan	el ul	men mer	nen en	om on
					p
					per par

Those who wish to form a collection of seals will find it almost impossible to obtain originals in any number. Some of the great seals are procurable, but those of private persons, whether bishops or nobles, are, if of early date, rarely in the market, and their matrices are even less seldom met with. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that as a rule the seals of officials were destroyed at death, in order to prevent as far as possible any falsely attested document passing current. Copies of seals, which for purposes of study are nearly as useful, may, however, be obtained, and various substances have been recommended. Thus the ordinary schoolboy knows how to obtain impressions with well-kneaded bread, a substance improved upon if the bread mould is covered with several coats of gum. A far better material will be found in gutta-percha, which should be warmed until it is sufficiently soft and pliable to receive the faintest details. It has, however, a bad defect. When it is dry it not infrequently becomes twisted or otherwise contorted. This may be avoided by gluing the cast to a



strong card or wooden tablet. Casts of fine character are made from a mould with sulphur, but the most usual and the best are those cast in plaster of Paris, not that generally used by builders, but a kind more finely ground. This is, however, easily procurable. Plaster casts can be taken only from a mould, and this is best formed of beeswax melted in turpentine, and thickened into a stiff paste with finely powdered whiting. Modern letter-seals may be made from the matrix by melting sealing-wax on a card held over a candle or gas jet, and carefully stamped when nearly cool. Seal-engravers usually dust the matrix with dry vermilion. By this method the central design appears dull, the border polished and glossy. A curious method of taking impressions is sometimes successful, and is described in "Notes and Queries," 1st Series, vol. XI, p. 314. It is said to hold good, even of brittle impressions in sealing-wax. The seal must be placed face downwards on a sheet or block of lead, and struck sharply with a heavy hammer; it should then leave an impression in the lead without injuring the seal. It hardly seems credible, but iron is said to serve as well as lead.

The student of records often finds it needful and useful to describe the seals appended to the document he is consulting. He should do this in the following order:—

Method of attachment. Material. Form; whether round, oval, octagonal, vesica shaped, shield-shaped, or lozenge-shaped. Comparative size; whether large or small. Colour. Device of the obverse. Device of the reverse or counter-seal. Legend, specifying the character of the lettering and state of preservation.

There are a number of important collections of seals,



both of casts, original impressions, and matrices, available for the use of students. Foremost, perhaps, in number is the important collection preserved in the rooms of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, which is closely followed by the National Collection. In this the original impressions and casts are preserved in the Department of Manuscripts. For these a reader's ticket is necessary, but the seals of the kings and a representative British and foreign series are shown in table cases in the King's Library. The original matrices are exhibited in the department of British and Medieval Antiquities. There is a large and important collection of seals—the Rawlinson Collection, preserved at Oxford (but these are chiefly foreign), and almost every local museum has a few examples. Thus there is a small but interesting series of matrices in the Birmingham Art Gallery, and another, part of the Fitch Collection, in the Castle Museum at Norwich. Indeed, most counties possess within their borders a collection of casts from which the local seals may be studied ; and there are few studies more interesting.

The following papers of a general character will prove helpful :—

“ Matrices of Medieval Seals ” ( “ Proc. Soc. of Antiq.,” 2nd Ser., IX, 36–54 ).

“ Notes on the Documentary History of Seals ” ( “ Wilts Arch. Mag.,” XXVIII, 203–210 ).

“ Illustrations of the Great Seals of England. ” ( A. B. Wyon. Introduction. )

“ Forged Matrices of Medieval Seals ” ( “ Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.,” XIII, 348–50, 353–5 ).



## CHAPTER I

### THE STORY OF THE GREAT SEAL

THE full story of the seals of the sovereigns of England yet remains to be written ; but a summary of the incidents pertaining to their history—apart from their actual value as works of art and their technical description—may be of some advantage in a treatise of this description. The information here given is culled from the Close Rolls, Patent Rolls, Acts of the Privy Council, Rymer's "Fœdera," Rolls of Parliament, Treasury Papers, and other authoritative sources.

From the earliest times of our record history, it is found that the great seal of the sovereign was in the custody or control of the chancellor. For the most part he was entrusted with the personal custody of the great seal ; but occasionally there was another official under him, termed the *custos sigilli*, or vice-chancellor. From time to time it also became necessary, when chancellors were visiting (as bishops) their dioceses, when laid up by sickness, or when accompanying the king to foreign parts, for deputy-holders of the seal to be appointed at pleasure. Usually, too, between the death, resignation, or removal of a chancellor and the appointment of his successor the custody of the seal was put in commission.

Of the great seal itself, Lord Campbell, in his intro-



duction to the "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," says, in words that cannot be improved:—

"It is considered the emblem of sovereignty, the *clavis regni*, the only instrument by which on solemn occasions the will of the sovereign can be expressed. Absolute faith is universally given to every document purporting



GREAT SEAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

to be under the Great Seal, as having been duly sealed with it by the authority of the sovereign."

A large state seal was first made in the days of Edward the Confessor, and it is known that it was in the successive custody of his chancellors Wulvius and Reimbaldus. Under the early Norman kings, the chancellor, who was not then the high state official he afterwards became, confined himself to his strictly official duties, the chief of which was the authenticating royal acts by affixing the



great seal to all grants and other documents that ran in the sovereign's name.

One of the first incidents recorded of the great seal is the tragic event chronicled by Hoveden. William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, the able and vigorous chancellor of Richard I, always had vice-chancellors under him, who were entrusted with the actual custody of the great seal.



GREAT SEAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

The second of these vice-chancellors was Roger Malus Catulus or Malchien (a name that afterwards took the form of Machell), who accompanied Richard to Sicily on his way to Palestine, Longchamp being left in England to administer the government. The vice-chancellor was unhappily drowned in a shipwreck off Cyprus, in April, 1191, with the great seal suspended round his neck. On his return, Richard ordered all charters sealed with the seal that had caused Roger's death to be returned, declar-



ing them invalid unless impressed with the new seal—thereby considerably replenishing his exhausted coffers.

When the boy-king Henry III came to the throne, all grants for the first three years passed under the seal of the protector or regent, William, Earl Marshal. The grant ran in the king's name, and stated at the end that it was sealed with the Earl Marshal's seal, *quia nondum sigillum habuimus*.

In 1218 a new royal seal was made, the work being entrusted to Walter de Ripa, a goldsmith. On 7 November he was granted, as stated on the Close Rolls, five marks from the Treasury for silver for the seal, as its weight was equal to five marks; and on 2 December Walter obtained 40s. for the workmanship. But the seal was not yet to be used, for provision was made by the Common Council of the realm, and entered on the Patent Rolls, that no charter or letters patent were to be sealed with the great seal until the king came to his majority.

It was ordered in 1230 that, during the king's absence in Gascony, writs usually sealed by the chancellor's seal were to be sealed with the exchequer seal, and writs usually sealed with the exchequer seal were to be sealed with the justiciary's private seal.

When the king was about to go into Gascony, in June, 1253, he entrusted the custody of the great seal to the queen.

A new seal was made in 1260. It was brought into the king's presence in his chamber at Westminster, by the Bishop of London, on St. Luke's Day. The king committed its custody to Nicholas, Archdeacon of Ely. The old seal was broken into small fragments, which were ordered to be distributed among the poor of some religious



houses as a royal gift. The Archdeacon of Ely was the nominee of Simon de Montfort and the barons, who had then the king in their power. Henry regained some independent power in the following year, and in July, 1261, recovered the seal from Nicholas and transferred it to Walter de Merton, as the king's chancellor, the patent of appointment expressly stating that it was without the consent of the barons. A year later the king crossed the seas, and was absent from July to December. Henry took with him John de Mansel as keeper of the seal, leaving Merton to act as chancellor and to use the justiciary's seal during his absence. On Henry's return the barons again obtained the ascendancy, removed Walter de Merton, and secured the appointment of the Archdeacon of Ely to the chancellorship with custody of the great seal. The seal was practically in the hands of the barons from that date until the overthrow of Simon de Montfort and his allies at the battle of Evesham in 1265. Almost immediately after this event, the king formally repudiated various acts done under cover of the great seal at a time when it was in the control of Simon.

The references to the great seal, and other seals of sovereignty, showing the jealous care with which they were guarded, are very numerous in the records of the reigns of the first three Edwards, more especially on the Close Rolls. In January, 1273, Iterus Bochard and Lucasius de Luca were appointed to make payments at Paris, and at the fair of Luigny to the king's creditors, which appeared to be due from the king by letters sealed with the seal that he used in the Holy Land.

On Friday, the feast of St. Matthew, 1274, the great seal was delivered at Windsor to Robert Burnel, Arch-



deacon of York, as chancellor, and he forthwith sealed both ordinary writs and writs of precept.

A mandate was issued in October, 1274, to the constable of the castle of Bordeaux to pay £40 to one of the burgesses for twenty tuns of wine long since bought of him for the king's use, and for which the king was bound to him by letters sealed with the old seal. After payment the constable was to receive the letters sealed with the old seal, the present letter sealed with the new seal, and letters of receipt.

On 14 February, 1276, Chancellor Burnel, then Bishop of Bath and Wells, retired from court and delivered the seal to Sir John de Kirkeby, who on the same day delivered it into the wardrobe. The chancellor was about to depart to Dover to cross the seas, and it is stated that he urged on Sir John to expedite the affairs of the chancery during his absence. In February, 1278, the chancellor again crossed the seas, committing the seal to the like custody; it was kept in the king's wardrobe under Sir John's seal. On Monday before midsummer, 1279, the king landed at Dover, when Master Thomas Bek and John de Kirkeby, the custodians of the great seal during his absence, delivered it to his chancellor, the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

In May, 1277, it was signified to all persons in Ireland that the king had changed the seal used by him in Ireland since his infancy, and had caused a new seal to be delivered to Fromund le Brun, king's clerk, chancellor of that land, wherewith to seal writs.

An interesting statement relative to the government of the Channel Islands, which shows the great importance of royal seals, is entered on the Patent Rolls in



November, 1279. It is there stated that the men of Jersey and Guernsey suffered much by wreck at sea and by depredations on land, and in many other ways, chiefly because the king had no seal in those islands wherewith writs of inhabitants might be sealed and business expedited; and that in consequence the king had provided a seal, which he sent to the island bailiffs to seal writs which had previously to be obtained in the chancery of England, and also to seal agreements and contracts which heretofore were made only by word of mouth and not by writing. The bailiffs were instructed to make proclamation of the said seal.

In 1279 the very unusual step was taken of removing the great seal out of the country. On Monday before St. Dunstan's Day of that year (12 May) Edward I crossed the seas from Dover to France, and with him travelled his chancellor, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, carrying the great seal. In October of the following year, however, the more usual custom was maintained; for when the king at that date again left England, both great and privy seals were lodged with the treasurer in the exchequer.

Chancellor Burnel died on Saturday, 8 November, 1292, at Berwick. On his death the great seal, then in his custody, was delivered to Walter de Langton, keeper of the wardrobe, under the seal of William de Hamilton, who signed writs therewith till the Wednesday following, on which day he started for Wells with the bishop's body. On 3 December the seal was committed to John de Langton, who on the morrow sealed writs.

On Thursday, 22 August, 1297, Bishop John de Langton, the chancellor, on the ship called the "Cog Edward,"



near Winchelsea, in which the king was ready to cross to Flanders, delivered to Edward I his great seal, which the king received and straightway handed to Sir John de Benestede for custody. About sunset on the following Tuesday, 27 August, Edward, the king's son, supplying the king's place in England, in his chamber in the castle of Tunbridge, delivered to Sir John de Langton, the chancellor, the seal which was wont to be used in England while the king was in Gascony, and on the morrow he sealed writs therewith.

The king returned from Flanders on 14 March, 1298, landing at Sandwich at three in the afternoon. On the morrow, at six in the morning, Chancellor Langton, in the king's chamber at Sandwich, "before the king's bed in his presence and by his command," delivered the seal which was used in England while the king was in Flanders to Walter Langton, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, the treasurer, for custody in the treasury. Thereupon the king delivered with his own hand, under his privy seal, to Chancellor John de Langton, the Bishop of Chichester, his great seal, which he had with him in Flanders.

Towards the end of 1298, John de Langton was nominated Bishop of Ely, and during the time he was absent from the court on that business the great seal was formally committed to other hands.

A commission of oyer and terminer was granted to two justices in December, 1298, touching grave charges brought against two merchants of Lucca for counterfeiting, *inter alia*, the king's great and privy seals, and the seal of Edward, the king's son.

In January, 1305, the king, by writ of privy seal, com-



manded Walter, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, the treasurer, to deliver, in the presence of the council at Westminster, the great seal to Sir William de Hamilton, Dean of York, whom the king had selected to be his chancellor. This mandate was executed on 16 January, and on the same day, after dinner, the new chancellor sealed his first writ with it for William de Grenefeld, Archbishop-elect of York, who had preceded him in the chancellorship for two years.

Towards the end of the reign of Edward I, one John de Bernwill committed the grave and treasonable offence of counterfeiting the privy seal, which was also the privy seal of Edward II until his accession. For this offence his lands and goods were seized into the king's hands ; but pardon was granted him by Edward II, in November, 1307, and the sheriff of Lincoln was ordered to restore Bernwill's property.

Emboldened perchance by the pardon of Bernwill, another reproduction of the privy seal was forged in the next year. John de Redinges was charged, in 1312, with counterfeiting the king's privy seal and for therewith sealing letters. He asserted that he had obtained the seal from Edmund de Malo Lacu, late steward of the household, and that he had paid him for the same four hundred talents of gold. The case was tried according to the law and custom of the king's marshalsea, when Sir Edmund de Malo Lacu was acquitted of all blame, but Redinges was convicted and subsequently hanged.

On the evening of 8 January, 1308, in the king's chamber in the priory of St. Martin's, Dover, the Bishop of Chichester, as chancellor, delivered to Edward II, under his seal, the great seal. The king received it



in his own hands and delivered it to Sir William de Meltun, to be carried with him in the wardrobe beyond the sea ; and he straightway delivered another seal of his, shortly before made anew at London, for the government of the realm in the king's absence, in a red bag sealed with the seal of Sir William Inge, to the chancellor. With this seal the chancellor sealed writs, on the following day after the king's passage, in the hospital of God's House, under the testimony of Peter de Gaveston, then keeper of the realm of England.

A further record in the Close Rolls records the delivery, on 15 March, to the clerks of the treasury, of the small seal of the king's that Sir Peter de Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, had used for sealing writs whilst the king was without the realm at Boulogne for the purpose of marrying the daughter of the King of France.

Full particulars are given in the Close Rolls of the king receiving the great seal from the Bishop of Chichester at Woodstock, in May, 1310 ; also of its transference from its temporary custodians, in the following July, to the Bishop of Worcester in Westminster Hall, "at the great bench upon which the chancellor was wont to sit."

In 1313 the great seal started on a pilgrimage to the famous shrine at Canterbury, but did not accomplish the journey. The Bishop of Worcester, on 17 April, left the king's presence at Windsor to make the Canterbury pilgrimage ; with him he took the great seal, which was secured in its bag under the seals of Sir Adam de Osgodeby, Sir Robert de Bardelby, and Sir William Ermyne. But when the bishop had got as far as Sutton-at-Hone, he was hindered (apparently by illness), and returned to Lessners, where he stayed with the seal for



three days, and on 22 April returned to London. On 12 May, being the eve of the Ascension, Edward II, with his queen and many magnates, at the request of the Pope and the King of France, passed the sea at Dover into France for divers affairs touching his duchy of Aquitaine; the great seal did not on this occasion accompany the sovereign, but remained in the custody of the chancellor.

An instance of the use of the great seal by those to whose temporary custody it was committed is recorded on 2 June, 1315. On that day Sir John de Sandall, the chancellor, left London as the king's envoy to the Earl of Lancaster at Kenilworth, the king being then at Westminster. The chancellor left the great seal, under his own seal, at his inn near Aldgate, London, in the triple custody of Sir William de Ermyne, Sir Adam de Osgodeby, and Robert de Bardelby, with instructions to execute what pertained to the chancellor's office in his absence. On the same day William, Adam, and Robert opened the seal at Westminster and caused writs to be therewith sealed.

Another instance of this occurred in November of the same year, when Chancellor Sandall left London to attend the election of the Dean of Lincoln, of which church he was a prebendary, and thence to the king in northern parts. The chancellor left, by the king's orders, the great seal in the custody of three knights, authorizing its due use by them or any two of them. On Friday, 17 November, the day of the chancellor's departure, two of the knights, after dinner, opened the seal and sealed writs in the chancellor's inn; but on the following Sunday these two knights proceeded to Newark and there restored the seal to the chancellor, who on the Monday in that town used it for writ sealing.



Again, in May, 1317, when Chancellor Sandall, then Bishop of Winchester, was about to set out for Canterbury to take part in the consecration of the bishop-elect of London, he was instructed, on account of the great and arduous affairs of the king, to leave the seal in his inn at Southwark in commission for use during his absence ; he left London on 11 May, and returned on the 18th. In November of the same year, Bishop Sandall obtained royal licence to resort to his bishopric and to be absent for some time, and the seal was again put in commission. In February of the following year the king granted permission to Sandall to go on pilgrimage to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and three joint custodians of the great seal were appointed. He was absent on this pilgrimage from 11 February to 19 February, when he returned to Southwark and resumed the custody and use of the seal. In March, 1318, the chancellor went, by the king's command, to Leicester, the great seal being placed as before in triple custody. Full details are given of the formal transference of the seal in the palace of Westminster, at the Feast of Whitsuntide in that year, from the Bishop of Winchester to the new chancellor, the Bishop of Ely.

In October, 1319, the Bishop of Ely was warned by the king never to make execution of any mandate under the great seal on the information of any person whatsoever, unless the king had either instructed him by word of mouth or by letters under the privy seal.

In the green chamber of Westminster Palace, on 4 June, 1320, in the presence of the archbishop, divers earls and bishops, and the barons of the exchequer and justices of both benches, Edward II caused two small seals to be brought before him, one of the time of his



father which was used in England when the king was in Flanders, and the other that was used in England when the present king was in France. The king caused the first of these silver seals to be broken and the pieces delivered to his chancellor, the Bishop of Norwich, as his fee; but he left the other seal in a bag under the chancellor's seal. Edward II, who was about to cross the seas to do homage for the duchy of Aquitaine and other lands to the King of France, then ordained that his great seal should remain closed up in a secure place whilst he was out of the kingdom, and that the little seal should meanwhile serve for the government of the realm. The king set sail on 19 June, accompanied by the chancellor, and the small seal was used from time to time during their absence, by duly nominated officials.

The great seal was for some time, during 1321, by the king's command, in the custody of his consort, Queen Isabella, to whom Sir William de Ermyne, keeper of the rolls of chancery, had to resort when it was required for use. On September, 1322, the Bishop of Norwich, the chancellor, received permission to make a tour of his see and to stay there some time, and the great seal was duly put in commission. The chancellor was taken ill in June, 1323, when staying at the abbey of St. Mary's, York; the king, who was then at Bishopthorpe, gave directions for the surrender of the seal, and the bishop, "lying on his bed in his chamber," forthwith resigned it to Sir William de Ermyne and others.

Robert de Baldock, Archdeacon of Middlesex, was appointed chancellor in 1323. In August, 1324, when the king was at Windsor for the sake of buck-hunting, the chancellor obtained licence to return to his house and stay



there for a time for recreation. The great seal was handed by the archdeacon to the king when he was in the forest, by whom it was transferred to the custody of Sir William de Ermyne, the keeper of his privy seal. Sir William carried it on the morrow to the abbey of Chertsey, and there used it for the sealing of writs. On Friday, 16 November, of the same year, Chancellor Baldock, on his leaving for York to have treaty there with the Scots, sitting at table in the hall of his lodging in Ivy Lane, near St. Paul's, London, delivered by his own hands the great seal, under his own seal, to Sir Richard de Ermyne, keeper of the chancery rolls, in the presence of other chancery clerks, to do what pertains to the office of the great seal until the chancellor's return to court. The seal was restored to the chancellor by Sir William, at Lenton Priory, Nottingham, on 19 December.

As the grievous times at the end of the reign of Edward II culminated, the unhappy king put to sea from Bristol in the endeavour to escape his enemies, accompanied by Chancellor Baldock and others. On 26 October, 1326, Isabella and her faction seized the reins of government and declared Edward's son, the Duke of Aquitaine, keeper of the realm. On the same day the duke began to exercise his rule, and made use of his own privy seal in the absence of any other. In the following month the king was apprehended in Wales, and was supposed to have executed a transference of the great seal to his consort and son, Baldock being imprisoned and dying in Newgate. Isabella and her son assumed custody of the seal, and William de Ermyne, master of the rolls, then Bishop of Norwich, acted for a time under their direction



as quasi-chancellor, the seal being given up daily to Isabella's keeping after use.

Edward III, on 28 January, 1327, delivered his great seal to John Bishop of Ely, as his chancellor in his palace of Westminster, and the bishop caused it to be carried to his house in a bag under his seal; and on the morrow, after two flowers of the arms of France had been engraved on the lower part of the seal, he caused writs to be therewith sealed. On Sunday, 4 October, the chancellor, in his chamber in the priory of Lenton, Nottingham, produced a new great seal of the king, newly made, from a linen bag, sealed with his (the chancellor's) seal; and, in the presence of divers clerks of chancery and others, declared it to be the king's will that all writs, letters, and charters should be sealed with the new seal, and the old one broken. The next day, in the presence of the king at Nottingham Castle, the old seal was broken into small pieces, and the chancellor gave the pieces to Richard his epigurnel (sealer), and carrying the new seal to his lodging immediately used it.

The next transference of the seal was made on Ascension Day, 1328, when it was handed over by the king, in a chapel of St. Andrew's Priory, Northampton, immediately after Mass, to Henry Bishop of Lincoln, who for a short time acted as chancellor. Its formal transference to successive chancellors during the long reign of Edward III is duly chronicled, from time to time, in the Close Rolls.

Mention is made in 1335 of letters patent issued under the king's secret seal, called "le griffoun." In 1339 the king ordered the treasurer and barons of the exchequer to invariably honour all letters brought before them by





THE BURSE USED BY THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO CONTAIN  
THE GREAT SEAL







any steward, receiver, bailiff, minister, or keeper of the king's manors or lands signed with his secret seal of the "griffoun." This order was frequently repeated at subsequent dates.

On 11 July, 1338, the king sent a great seal which he wished to be used until his return from beyond the seas, in a red bag under the privy seal, to Sir John de St. Paul, keeper of the chancery rolls, and to Thomas de Bamburgh, keeper of the other great seal, at Bramford, to be kept by them ; it was opened by John and Thomas, and impressions were sent to all the sheriffs of England, and to other ministers in Scotland, Ireland, and Aquitaine, with orders to obey writs under that seal. The sheriffs were ordered to publish and exhibit the impression in full county court. When the king was just about to set sail with his fleet from the port of Orwell, Suffolk, on his great expedition against France, namely on 14 July, Sir John and Sir Thomas came to Edward III in a ship called "La Cristofre" with the great seal, and delivered it to him in a bag under their seals. They returned with the great seal of absence, and handed that over to Richard Bishop of London, then chancellor, at his manor of Fulham, on Sunday the eve of St. Margaret.

A curious circumstance is recorded on the Patent Rolls of 1339, which shows the great importance attached to the presence of seals on charters. An *inspeximus* was being made on 25 October of that year of a grant in tail by Anthony Bek, late Bishop of Durham, of the manor of Belestre in Tyndale; and when the writing was exhibited for confirmation at the great marble table in the chancery, and was in the lap of Richard, Bishop of London, the chancellor, Anthony's seal was accidentally torn off in the



presence of the Earl of Huntingdon, the king's clerks of the chancery, and others; with their consent the seal was re-sewn to the writing.

Shortly after midnight, on the morn of 8 December, 1339, Richard Bishop of London, the chancellor, died in the hostel of the Bishop of Winchester at Southwark. At daybreak the steward of the chancellor's household and another brought the great seal to the archbishop at Lambeth, and the archbishop caused the seal to be taken to the Carmelites' in Fleet Street, where the council was about to be held that day. The council, with the consent of Edward, keeper of England, delivered the seal to Sir John de St. Paul, keeper of the chancery rolls, and two others, to be kept under their seals to do royal business until the king should otherwise order. In February, 1340, Edward III returned from foreign parts, and on 1 March delivered a newly-made great seal, brought with him from across the seas, to Sir John de St. Paul, who restored to the king the other great seal used during his absence. In November of the same year, when the king had again returned to his kingdom, it was ordered that the seal "brought from parts beyond the sea" should be the only one henceforth used in England. This was the first seal upon which the French arms were quartered and whereon an English monarch is styled *Rex Franciæ*. Critics condemn this seal as "coarse, plain, and ill engraved," so that it is satisfactory to recollect that it was of foreign workmanship.

Two irregularities in the custody of the great seal are entered by the chancellors on the Close Rolls for 1341 and 1342. In the first case, when Sir Robert de Bouchier was chancellor, order was received from the king,



under his privy seal, after the hour of vespers, on Tuesday, the feast of St. Donatus, to deliver the great seal in a bag to Ralph, Baron of Stafford, to be taken to the king at the Tower. The seal remained out of the chancellor's custody until the hour of prime on the following morning, when it was returned by the king, and the chancellor took it to the parish church called "Berkyngchapell," near the Tower, and there had it opened in the presence of various chancery clerks, and caused writs to be sealed within the church.

The other incident occurred on 16 May, 1342, when Sir Robert Parvyng was chancellor. He received royal orders to send the seal to the king, who was in a chamber on the water of the palace of Westminster. The king delivered it to the Earls of Derby and Northampton, who immediately caused divers charters of pardon for homicide to be sealed and presented to the men suing for them, without their being entered in the Chancery Rolls as is customary, and without the payment of the usual fees.

When the king left England in October, 1342, a special seal of absence was prepared for temporary use; this action was repeated in 1345, when Robert de Sadyngton was chancellor; the king on this last occasion was only absent in Flanders for ten days.

In September, 1345, William Credil, clerk, was bailed out of Newgate by certain leading citizens, who undertook to have him before the king and council at Michaelmas to answer to a charge of counterfeiting the great seal. The result of this grave charge is not recorded.

In 1345, and on various occasions during the next fifteen years, down to the Peace of Brétigny in 1360, the



documents citing the formal exchange by the chancellor of the great seal of presence for the seal of absence, on each occasion when Edward III left the country, are recorded in Rymer's "Fœdera"; it would be tedious to repeat such entries. The Treaty of Brétigny was signed on 8 May, 1360; and on 18 May the king arrived at Rye, and on the following day the great seal of absence was deposited in the treasury.

In February, 1363, the great seal was transferred from the Bishop of Winchester to the Bishop of Ely. This was the singularly beautiful seal engraved at the time of the Treaty of Brétigny, which continued in use until 1369, when it was deposited in the treasury, and the seals in use before 1360, with the claim to the kingship of France, replaced in the chancellor's hands. The seal of absence was again brought into use in 1372; on 13 August, on board the king's ship "La Grace de Dieu," off Sandwich, Sir John Knyvet, the chancellor, surrendered to Edward III the great seal of presence; the king caused it to be transmitted to the treasury, and delivered to the chancellor the great seal of absence to be used whilst he was across the seas.

The death of Edward III on 21 June, 1377, at the manor of Sheen, is entered on the Close Rolls. It is immediately afterwards recorded that, in the absence abroad of the Bishop of St. David's, the chancellor, William de Burstall and two other guardians of the great seal handed it to Richard II on the morrow, in a white silk bag. The king restored it to the Bishop of St. David's, as his chancellor, on 26 June, at Kensington; the seal was retained by the bishop until October, 1378, when it was transferred to the custody of Sir Richard le



Scroge, the new chancellor. The office of chancellor, including the custody of the great seal, was changed with great frequency during the reign of Richard II.

The great and other seals of Edward III were used by his successor, the necessary alterations being effected by William Geyton, the king's engraver.

The king's seal was again forged in the time of Richard II. In February, 1380, Ralph Palmere and the bailiffs of Shaftesbury were directed to arrest the forgers of the king's money and seals in that place or neighbourhood, together with their instruments and engines for the work of counterfeiting, and to bring them forthwith before the justices of the King's Bench. By the 25 Edward III, cap. ii., forgery of the great seal was declared to be treason. In the days of the Commonwealth, as soon as a great seal had been provided, the counterfeiting thereof was also declared high treason. This severe penalty was reduced to felony by 8 & 9 Vict. cap. cxiii.

There are no noteworthy incidents relative to the custody of the magnificent great seal of Henry IV, in the making of which ten pounds of silver were used. On 4 September, 1416, Henry V left Sandwich for Calais, and committed the custody of the great seal of gold during his absence to Simon Gaunstede, the keeper of the rolls. A new seal was ordered to be immediately prepared, on 14 June, 1420, in connexion with the Treaty of Troyes, the words *Hæres regni Franciæ* to be inserted in the legend.

In the reign of Henry VI the great seal in general use was one of silver, but the yet larger golden seal of Henry V was used on rare occasions. The silver seal of



Henry IV, soon after the accession of Henry VI, was differenced by the addition of a small quatrefoil. For engraving this "secret sign," and altering the legend round the circumference, John Bernes, goldsmith of London, was paid 20s. On 25 February, 1432, the king, amid much formality, transferred the two great seals, one of gold and one of silver, from the Archbishop of York to his new chancellor, the Bishop of Bath. The bishop at once took the seals to his hospice, in the parish of St. Clement Danes; each seal was in a bag of white leather. The one containing the silver seal was opened the same day by the new chancellor, and used for sealing.

The next chancellor was the Archbishop of Canterbury, and on his death in 1454 the king appointed the Earl of Salisbury as his successor. On this occasion a chest (*cista*), locked and sealed, was delivered up, containing three seals, one of gold and two of silver, which had been in the archbishop's custody at the time of his death. At a change of chancellorship two years later, the three seals are again mentioned, each enclosed in a separate leather bag—one of gold, a great one of silver, and one of silver of smaller size. It is supposed that this third seal was the great seal of Henry VI for France, which after the loss of the French dominions in 1451 came into the custody of the English chancellor. After the fateful battle of Northampton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on 25 July, 1460, delivered up to the king (then in the custody of the Duke of York) the three seals, which were transferred to the Bishop of Exeter.

Edward IV used a newly engraved seal of gold, which fell into the hands of Henry VI on Edward's flight to France in 1470. Henry VI, on resuming his reign for



a brief period, adopted this seal, the word *Henricus* being substituted for *Edwardus*. After the battle of Barnet, when Edward IV again assumed the crown, he had another new seal prepared, which lasted till the end of his reign.

There is nothing noteworthy as to the history of the great seal from the time of Edward IV until the reign of Henry VIII is reached, by which time the old custom of the transference of a single great seal at change of chancellorship had been restored. Henry VIII, up to 1532, used his father's great seal, with certain additions on the counter-seal and a changed legend. On 22 December, 1535, William Archbishop of Canterbury surrendered the seal, in a white leather bag, to the king at Westminster, by whom it was transferred, with the chancellorship, to Thomas Cardinal Archbishop of York. About four years later this seal again changed hands, being surrendered by Cardinal Wolsey on 17 October, 1529, and delivered to Sir Thomas More on 25 October. The great seal, when delivered to the king on this occasion, was in a white leather bag, which was sealed in six places in white wax with the cardinal's seal. The king assigned it to the temporary custody of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and they enclosed the seal in its leather bag in another case or bag of crimson velvet, embroidered with the arms and insignia of England, sealing this case with red wax. Thus doubly sealed and encased, the great seal was further secured by being placed in an iron casket, which was itself bound round and sealed. Stephen, Bishop of Winchester, as clerk of the council, retained the key of the casket. The casket was taken to Windsor, and on 20 October, in a chamber



of the king's oratory, was opened by Henry VIII, and the seals of the bags broken. The great seal was then used for certain briefs and for a proclamation prohibiting the export of grain, in the presence of Bishop Gardiner and others. Then the king himself replaced the great seal in the white bag, which he sealed with his own signet ring in white wax, and it was also sealed with the seals of Bishop Gardiner and of John Taylor, clerk of the master of the rolls; and thus it remained until its transference five days later to Sir Thomas More.

It should here be observed that when the great seal was in the custody of Cardinal Wolsey, the rule against carrying it out of the country was broken. In 1521 the cardinal carried it with him into the Low Countries, and even sealed writs with it at Calais. This violation of an unwritten law formed one of the articles of his impeachment.

In this reign the term "Broad Seal," as an *alias* for the great seal, came into occasional use. Then when preparations for war were being made in 1545-6, the Privy Council instructed the chancellor to have general musters taken by commissions into all shires "under the Brode Seale."

In this same year the chapter of St. Paul's, being opposed to the acceptance of Dr. Maye, one of the king's chaplains, as dean, declined to act, as they had not received any intimation "under the Greate Seale," or even letters on parchment. The king, however, disregarded their scruples, and ordered them instantly to proceed to election, his wishes being equally imperative whether written on paper or parchment, and whether sealed or unsealed!



Henry Coldewille, goldsmith, was the engraver of the great seal of the youthful Edward VI, and Robert Fourthe of the new privy seal; thirty ounces of silver were used for the latter, but the great seal absorbed twenty pounds of the same metal. The latter weight seems astonishing, but the entry in the Acts of the Privy Council of 24 March, 1547, is explicit—"xx<sup>li</sup> for somuche employed for the newe making of the Greate Seale of Inglande." However, a more particular warrant was issued on the following 4th of April, when a total of £42. 6s. 7d. was assigned to Coldewille, being £17. 6s. 7d. for the silver used, and £25 for the workmanship.

Queen Mary used her brother's seal for some months; her own seal only lasted for a short time, being soon superseded by that of Philip and Mary. On 20 May, 1555, it was agreed by the Privy Council to move the king and queen to cause a seal to be made with the "letters P. and M., with a crowne over the same, with whiche Seale all lettres passing this Boorde should be sealed, the same to remayne in the custodie of the eldest Clerc of the Counsaill."

On 6 October of the same year Henry and Richard Overton were committed to the Tower on the charge of forging the great seal; two days later they were removed to Newgate.

It was not until 3 June, 1556, that order was given to the lord treasurer to supply Dirrick, "the graver of the mynte," with as much silver as he required for making and engraving a new great seal. This was the elaborate seal bearing the king and queen seated on one side, and on horseback on the other.

On the second day of her reign Elizabeth received the



great seal from Chancellor Heath. The queen kept it in her personal custody for over a month ; but at length, on 22 December, 1558, between the hours of ten and eleven, at Somerset House, Elizabeth took the great seal from its white leather bag and red velvet purse, and delivered it to Sir Nicholas Bacon, "with the title of Lord Keeper and all the powers belonging to a Lord Chancellor."

In March, 1574, one William Walding obtained a grant of the sole privilege of writing and flourishing the queen's name and title in all charters and books to pass the great seal. Half of the fines for any infringement of this grant was to be paid to the use of the poor children within the Hospital of the Grey Friars, London.

For twenty years the great chancellor Bacon held the seal. On his death, in February, 1579, the Queen sent lords Burghley and Leicester to York House for the great seal. They received it from Lady Bacon in a bag sealed with the late chancellor's private signet, and for two months the queen retained it in her own custody at Westminster before the appointment of Chancellor Bromley. During that period, when it was necessary to use the seal for writs or patents, the formalities observed of extracting it from the sealed bag and from the red velvet embroidered purse, and its replacing, are duly set forth on seven separate entries in the Close Rolls.

Chancellor Bromley died in 1587, soon after he had affixed the great seal to the death warrant of Mary Queen of Scots. His death occurred at three o'clock on the morning of 12 April. The queen, who was at Greenwich, was at once informed, and dispatched John Forrescue, master of the wardrobe, to fetch the great seal.



Fortescue entered the late chancellor's house between seven and eight o'clock, when the seal was found locked in a chest, in its leather and velvet bags, under three seals, and given over to the queen's messenger by Henry Bromley. Fortescue, on reaching Greenwich, entered the queen's private chamber alone, and delivered it into her hands. The queen retained the seal for a fortnight, ere she entrusted its care, to the universal amazement, to her youthful favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton. On Hatton's death, in 1591, the seal was found sealed up in an iron red-painted chest. Hatton's successor, Puckering, died in 1596, when Elizabeth for a short interval again became her own chancellor, the great seal being kept in her bedchamber.

Sir Thomas Egerton, the next chancellor, held office for twenty-one years. On the queen's death in 1603, James I, by warrant of 5 April, directed that Elizabeth's great seal should be used as the great seal of England, and that it should remain in the charge of Elizabeth's lord keeper. On 3 May Egerton met the new king at Broxbourne, in Hertfordshire, and surrendered the seal into his hands. The king at once restored it to his keeping.

The king lost no time in procuring a seal of his own. The warrant for its execution, dated 8 May, was addressed "to our trustie and well-beloved servant, Charles Anthony, graver of our mynt and seales." On 19 July Elizabeth's old seal was broken and the new one handed by the king to Sir Thomas Egerton, who was then designated "Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain and Ireland" and raised to the peerage as Baron Ellesmere. Henceforth the custodian of the seal was known as "Lord Chancellor."



Two years later the vain king became dissatisfied with the appearance of his effigy on the great seal, objecting that "the canope over the picture of our face is so low imbossed, that thereby the seal in that place thereof doth easily bruise and take disgrace."

A warrant was issued on 25 June, 1605, for Charles Antony, the king's graver, to engrave the canopy over the king's face in the great seal higher and deeper; the work was to be done in the house and in the presence of the chancellor. In January, 1610, the same Charles Antony obtained a warrant for £55. 4s. 5d. for making and engraving seals and signets for nine years.

The aged Lord Ellesmere had become bedridden when James consented to release him from his duties. On 5 March, 1617, Buckingham and Winwood proceeded to York House, when the chancellor, from his bed, ordered his son to produce the seal, in its white leather bag, enclosed in the silk purse adorned with the royal arms. The royal messengers conveyed it to the king at Whitehall, who two days later committed its care to Sir Francis Bacon.

There are no particular incidents relative to the great seal during its subsequent custody by the great Lord Bacon. On the accession of Charles I, letters patent were issued, on 28 March, 1625, authorizing the use of all the existing official seals until further order. The new great seal was engraved by Edward Greene, chief graver of the mint, and was used in the second year of Charles I.

The great seal played an important part in the Commonwealth struggle. Clarendon tells us of the conference that took place between Lord Keeper Little-



ton and Hyde at Exeter House on 5 March, 1642. It was at this interview that Littleton said :—

I often think with myself of what importance it will then be which party shall have the great seal, the *clavis regni*, the token of supreme authority. . . . If I had not submitted this very night to those I dislike, the seal had been taken from me. . . . I have now got so fast into their confidence that I shall be able to preserve the seal in my own hands till the king require it of me.

Soon after this the king requested Littleton to repair to him at York with the seal. The seal was carried off surreptitiously by night, on Saturday, 21 May, by a special messenger, who had provided a relay of horses, and presented to the delighted king, “who for a moment supposed he had recovered all his authority.” The seal was speedily followed to York by Lord Littleton. Littleton had given out that he was going to his country house at Cranford from the Saturday to the Monday ; but when the House of Lords reassembled on Monday morning, the absence of the lord keeper led to inquiries. On the truth being known, the two Houses issued a warrant for his apprehension, and for the bringing back of the seal to Westminster. They further decreed that if Littleton did not return within fourteen days that all patents sealed with the great seal since his flight would be held void.

The loss of this third seal of Charles I, which dated from the beginning of the Long Parliament in 1640, threw the Parliamentary leaders into much confusion. In response to the proposal to make a new seal it was pointed out that this was an act of high treason by a law of Edward III, and might have serious consequences if



the king got the upper hand. In January, 1643, they passed ordinances making void all grants and patents under the seal since its abstraction in the previous May. On 11 May, 1643, the House of Commons was bold enough to resolve, without division, that the Great Seal ought to attend Parliament, and at last, on 15 May, a resolution for a new seal was carried, by 86 to 74, in a full House.

Meanwhile the old seal of the sovereign was still in use in those parts of England that remained Royalist. It passed from Keeper Littleton's hands into those of Keeper Lane at Oxford in 1645. When Oxford surrendered to the Parliament in May, 1646, Fairfax insisted on the transference of the seal, which was delivered up to two of the Commonwealth officers. On 3 July, a letter was read to the applauding Parliament from Fairfax stating that he had sent the great seal and other insignia of sovereignty surrendered at Oxford for the disposal of the Houses. A resolution was at once passed ordering the defacing and breaking of the great seal, and its temporary retention by Speaker Lenthall. The defacing was carried out with much ceremony on 11 August, the day on which the Parliamentary lord keepers were installed. Speaker Lenthall appeared at the head of the Commons at the bar of the House of Lords; a smith was sent for, who speedily defaced and broke up the seal, when the fragments were divided between the Speakers of the two Houses.

The vote of 20 May, 1643, for a new seal was resisted by the Lords, and eventually the Commons acted on their own responsibility. On 19 July, Thomas Simonds, an eminent medallist, appeared before the House of



Commons and was furnished with the following warrant, under the Speaker's signature :—

Ordered that Mr. Simonds be required and enjoined forthwith to make a new Great Seal for England, and that he shall have £100 for his pains, £40 in hand, and three score pounds as soon as he shall have finished the work.

On 20 September, a seal, copied from that of 1640, and in all respects resembling it, save for the date 1643, was brought to the House and sealed up in the Speaker's custody. The Lords did not give way until 30 November, but at that date they concurred in using the new seal, two keepers from the Lords and four from the Commons being appointed for its custody.

But previously to this—on 11 November (see Preface)—the parliamentary ordinance for the new seal had gone forth to the nation. In the four pages of the pamphlet room is found, not only to condemn Keeper Littleton's action, but to cancel all his grants since the removal of the seal. The new seal already prepared was ordered to be placed in the hands of John Earl of Rutland, Oliver Earl of Bullingbroke, Oliver St. John, Esq. (Solicitor-General), John Wild (Serjeant-at-Law), and Samuel Brown and Edmund Prideaux, representing the lower house.

Prynne's tract says that it had been resolved (June 14 and 26) "that the great Seale of England ought to attend the Parliament, that the absence of it hath been a cause of great mischief to the common wealth. That a remedy ought to be provided for these mischiefs. That the proper remedy is the making of a new great seale."

On 8 February, 1649, a new Commonwealth seal having



been prepared, the seal of 1643 was produced and publicly broken before the House by a smith; the fragments and the purse with the royal arms were handed over to the six commissioners. For the making of this new elaborate seal Thomas Simonds received the sum of £200. This seal gave place to a yet more elaborate successor, by the same engraver, in 1651. The second Commonwealth seal gave way, in its turn, to that of Oliver Cromwell as Protector, which was followed by that of his son Richard.

The seal of Richard Cromwell was broken in pieces within the House of Commons on 14 May, 1659, and the second Commonwealth seal of 1651, with the map of England and Ireland on one side, brought again into use.

The Long Parliament was finally dissolved on 16 March, 1660, and the new Royalist Parliament met on 1 May, when a declaration was read from Charles II, announcing a free pardon to all subjects who returned to their allegiance within forty days and stating his readiness to pass such a proclamation under the great seal of England. But which was England's great seal? The one Charles had with him at Breda could not legally be used as it was beyond the kingdom. A committee was appointed by the House on 5 May, to consider this question; they resolved, on 8 May, that all proceedings be in the king's name, and that they "knowing of no other great seal for the present than that which the House hath lately voted . . . that great seal be made use of until further order." On this point a conference of the two Houses was held on 10 May, when it was pointed out by the Commons that the kingdom suffered the gravest inconvenience for lack of use of a great seal, such as obstruction in all courts of justice,



obstruction in revenue so that no provision could be made for the king's reception or for paying the army, a check to the Admiralty in setting out the fleet, and a cessation of the collection of excise and customs. As a precedent for the use of the present seal, the case of King James using that of Queen Elizabeth was cited. The result is not recorded in the journals of either House, but it seems highly probable that the second Commonwealth seal was used from 10 May up to 20 May. On the latter date this seal was brought to the clerk's table of the House of Commons and there broken up by a smith, the pieces being delivered to the lords commissioners of the great seal. On the following day the king came to Whitehall bringing with him a royal seal dated 1653. This seal was one that Charles II had prepared when in exile in France, when, as stated by Clarendon, "he employed a graver to prepare a great seal which he kept himself, not intending to confer that office whilst he remained abroad."

A new great seal, engraved by Simonds, who had been so often employed on like work during the Commonwealth, was brought into use on 17 June, 1663, and presented to the lord chancellor at the Privy Council, the old seal being defaced in the king's presence. This one was in its turn defaced to make way for a successor in 1672. The 1672 seal was nearly stolen on 7 February, 1677, for "about one in the morning the Lord Chancellor Finch his mace was stolen out of his house in Queen Street; the seal laid under his pillow, so the thief missed it." But the "purse" of the seal was taken with the mace, and the thief, Thomas Sadler, had the effrontery to make a mock procession with these in the neighbourhood of the chancellor's house.



Sadler was, however, speedily arrested and within a few weeks hung at Tyburn.

On the death day of Charles II, 6 February, 1684, James II at once signed a warrant authorizing the use "of y<sup>e</sup> Great Seale engraven with the Image, Name, and Inscription of y<sup>e</sup> late dec'd King his Ma<sup>y</sup> dear Brother for sealing all things whatsoever that passe y<sup>e</sup> Great Seale, untill another Great Seale be made with his Ma<sup>y</sup> owne Royall Image, Name, and Inscription." It was not until 21 October, 1685, that James' own seal was ready, when that of Charles II was defaced, and its successor handed to the ever infamous Lord Jeffreys.

The seal of 1685 became famous at the Revolution owing to its loss and extraordinary recovery. James II, knowing the reverence attached to the great seal, determined to embarrass his successor. As the Prince of Orange approached the capital, James, on the night of 10 December, summoned Jeffreys to surrender the seal. At three o'clock in the morning the king in disguise, accompanied by Sir Edmund Hales, stole out of the Palace of Whitehall with the seal in his keeping and proceeded to the ferry at Westminster. As a waterman rowed them across to Lambeth, the king slipped the great seal into the water, thinking, as Lord Campbell says, that "he had sunk with it for ever the fortunes of the Prince of Orange." Strange to say, a few days later a Thames fisherman drew up in his net off Lambeth the discarded great seal, which was quickly handed over to the Lords of the Council, who delivered it to James' successor.

William and Mary's own seal came into use in 1689, and that of the king alone in 1695.



The Treasury papers for 1689-90 contain a report of three officers of the mint to the Lords of the Treasury, stating that they had perused the patent of the Roettiers, engravers of the mint, granted in 1669, to John, Joseph, and Philip Roettiers, three brothers, for engraving and making all sorts of designs, not only for gold and silver coins, but for medals and seals, with a salary of £450 per annum; that Joseph left England for the Paris mint in 1679, and Philip for the Brussels mint in 1685; but that John, the best artist, continued at the English mint with his two sons, James and Robert, bred up in the "science," at a salary of £325; that John was about to retire to Brussels, having lost the use of his right hand by a shrinking of the tendons, but that the sons, who were proficient in the puncheons and dies, had without their father's assistance, engraved their present Majesties' great seal, as well as the coronation medals. Eventually Henry Harris was appointed chief graver of the mint, with the two young Roettiers under him; the latter were to receive the salary of £325.

On the accession of George I, John Roos prayed to be continued as chief engraver of seals. His prayer was granted, and in August, 1716, the Treasury paid Roos' bill for seals, the officers of the mint having reported that "the work is good and he deserves the prices set down."

The charge for the workmanship of the great seal was £200, and for the silver used (117 oz. 10 dwt., at 5s. 2d. per ounce) £30. 1s. 1d. The account included £240 for the great and privy seals of Ireland; £26. 13s. 3½d. for the privy seal; £69. 15s. 0½d. for the exchequer seal; £68. 15s. 11d. for the judicial seal of Denbigh, Mont-



gomery, and Flint; and considerable sums for various steel signets for secretaries of state.

John Roos died in 1720, and was succeeded as chief engraver of seals, etc., by John Rollos. The latter's account for seals for George II, in 1729, reached the great total of £1408. 3s. 8d. Of this sum, the officers of the mint struck off £20 for overcharge for the seal for South Carolina. The account included seals for Scotland and Ireland, and also for the "Plantations in America." The amount for the Plantation seals came to £349. 13s. 3d., which was paid out of the Virginia quit-rents. The silver seal for New Jersey was lost in transit by shipwreck, and in the following year Rollos engraved a new one at a cost of £13. 14s. 6d. for workmanship.

It would be tedious to record the defacing of the old seals and the adoption of their successors under the Hanoverian dynasty, but the theft of the first seal of George III must not pass unnoticed. Very early in the morning of 24 March, 1784, thieves broke into the house of Lord Chancellor Thurlow in Great Ormond Street, "which then bordered on the country." Crossing the fields, they scaled the garden wall, forced the bars out of the kitchen window, and entered a room adjoining the chancellor's study. Here they found the great seal in its bags of leather and silk, two silver-hilted swords, and a small sum of money. With their booty they absconded, and the plunder was never recovered nor the thieves apprehended. The moment the chancellor woke and discovered his loss, he proceeded to Mr. Pitt, in Downing Street, and the two ministers then informed the king at Buckingham Palace. A council was at once summoned, and the chief engraver of seals was ordered immediately



to prepare a new great seal, differing in some respects from that which was stolen. So expeditiously was the work performed that the new seal was actually presented to the council and delivered to Lord Thurlow on the following day, 25 March. Political feeling ran so strongly that it was actually suggested, and believed by not a few, that the Whigs had planned the robbery to prevent, or at least check, the threatened dissolution of Parliament. Had this absurd notion been true, the Whigs would soon have been convinced of the futility of their design ; for the very first use made of the new seal was to append its impression, on 25 March, to a proclamation dissolving the Parliament and calling another.





OBVERSE OF FIRST GREAT SEAL OF HENRY III  
(British Museum)

## CHAPTER II

### ROYAL SEALS OF DIGNITY, COMMONLY CALLED GREAT SEALS

**F**OREMOST in interest, from their size, artistic merit, and on account of the large series of important documents they attest, stand the great seals of our sovereigns. We can easily see that upon them the best workmanship of the time was expended; they form therefore a means of noting the artistic skill of the designer, his power of drawing, and also the progress of the engraver's art. The idea of such a seal arose in France, at least such is the opinion of the learned authors of a "History of English Law." These able writers state that



“the seal of which our law made much in the later Middle Ages, of which it makes much at the present day, is French”; but they add, “the Confessor had a seal, and in all probability but very few of the men who fought by the side of the Norman duke had them.”

After such a statement we expect to find considerable similarity between the royal seals on the two sides of the Channel, and the seal of the Confessor is not very different in design from those of Henry I of France, 1031–60, or his successor; but neither is the resemblance so complete that we are compelled to believe a foreigner wrought Edward’s seal. It may well have been both designed and executed in our own realm.

As the great seal is the visible symbol of the sovereign’s “very act and deed,” so naturally its safe custody can only be confided to one of eminent trust; indeed, it was at first held solely by the justiciar, the first subject. It may be of interest to trace why he was elected. The council of the nation met in their earlier days about a table chequered in chessboard fashion, hence, as every schoolboy knows, the name “Court of Exchequer.” At this table all the great barons attended, and so continued until the days of Richard I. Attendances then became exceedingly irregular, until finally the members of the court were present upon special occasions only. Therefore, for practical considerations, in the absence of the king, a new chairman had perforce to be appointed. Thus the treasurer of the realm, whose presence for financial reasons was unavoidable, became president, and the court seal was kept by the chancellor of the Exchequer Court, who makes his appearance in this rôle temp. Henry III. It was, however, a time of change, and a



remodelling took place with Henry's death. Under his successor there is both a chancery and a chancellor, who attains the lofty position of the highest in rank of the king's servants, and whose power and influence was so great that we may consider him a secretary of state for all departments.<sup>1</sup>

After this the importance of the seal is now fully established, indeed very little was done by the king that was not brought into effect by a document bearing the great seal—it was, in fact, *the key of the kingdom*, and although the Court of Exchequer and the two benches had their seals, their authority was strictly limited. In Edward's reign we hear of writs under the privy seal, but these were merely orders to the chancellor to affix the more important symbol. The chancellor's office was in theory no sinecure, since he was expected to follow his sovereign day by day in the constant progresses which were always taking place; but this became at length impracticable. The uses of the great seal are thus summed up by Maitland and Pollack:—<sup>2</sup>

In its final form almost every message, order, or mandate that came, or was supposed to come from the king, whether it concerned the greatest matter or the smallest, whether addressed to an emperor or an escheator, whether addressed to all the lieges, or to one man, was a document settled in the chancery and sealed with the great seal. Miles of parchment, close rolls, and patent rolls, fine rolls and charter rolls, Roman rolls and Gascon rolls, and so forth, are covered with copies of these documents, and yet reveal but a part of the chancery's work, for no roll sets forth all those "original writs" that were issued, as of course.

It has been said above that it became impossible for the

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. of Eng. Law," I, 293.

<sup>2</sup> "Hist. of Eng. Law," I, 195.



chancellor to be always in personal attendance on the king. The Patent Roll for 14 Henry III shows us how inconvenient this very attendance might become. The chancellor passed to Gascony with the king, and of course with the great seal also. So that in his absence, writs usually sealed with the chancellor's seal were to be sealed with that of the exchequer, the place of the latter being taken by the private seal of the justiciar; this might have laid that official open to considerable temptation, and possibly did.

The term *half seal* is at times met with, and appears to refer to the reverse of a great seal; in other words, on a document sealed with the half seal, the reverse of the great seal would be affixed either without any obverse or with the obverse turned to the lower side. From the Act 1 Hen. VIII, cap. 16, the half seal would seem to be affixed at times to letters patent; it is also mentioned in the Act 8 Eliz. cap. 65 as the legal mode of sealing commissions to delegates for hearing Admiralty appeals. This Act was not repealed till 1832. Somewhat analogous is the demi-bulle sealing to certain documents from the papal see; while in England, the University of Oxford used a seal so called.<sup>1</sup>

*Wher that one Gowyn Norris serveunt to Jamys Edwards one of the bedylis of the Unyversitie, was arrested upon certen felony by hym don to one William Norres of Oxford, Merse, and Marten Lyndsey, depute to John Cottysford, Commysarye of the Unyversitie dyd feche hym out of prison by theyr half seayll.*

Reverting to the earliest seal in this series (those of Eadgar and Offa cannot be considered in this category), it will be found that it consists (see frontispiece) of an

<sup>1</sup> "Notes and Queries," 8th series, Vol. XI, p. 459.



obverse and reverse, on both of which the king is represented seated on a wooden stool or throne, clothed in an under-tunic reaching nearly to his feet, which are covered with shoes and low buskins; over this tunic is worn the gracefully draped royal mantle, fastened with a brooch on the shoulder. The regalia are a circular orb held in the left hand and a staff surmounted with a cross. The reverse differs very slightly, but in the right hand is a staff with a dove, and in the left hand the sword of justice. The legend still preserved the title, so dear to our Saxon kings, granted to them by the Emperor of the East. The seal of Edward, King (basileus) of the Angles: + SIGILLVM. EADWARDI ANGLORV BASILEI.

The Norman duke sets the type which all English kings follow almost without exception, that of the king in his dual capacity enthroned in robes of peace or leading his nation in war. Thus war and peace are henceforth the motif of the obverse and reverse of the great seal. In one respect, however, William's seal is different from those of his successors: he gives the more important side—the obverse—to war. Is this not just what we should expect from him? The horse upon which the king is seated is well drawn and devoid of any needless ornament; its trappings are of the simplest—a plain girth, neckband, reins, and headpiece. The armour worn by the monarch is that of the time, a suit or hauberk of leather, upon which was sewn rings of metal. Over this, upon his head, is a conical cap, and a simple prick-spur is fastened at his heel. In his left hand he bears the kite-shaped shield familiar to us in the Bayeux tapestry, and for offence a long lance with a pennon flying at its head. The legend



is a distich, half appearing on each side of the die. That on the obverse reads: HOC NORMANNORVM WILLELMVM NOZCE PATRONVM; while on the reverse are the words ZI HOC ANGLIÆ REGEN ZIGNO FATEARIS EVNDEM (Know ye this William Patron of the Normans, or by this seal



OBVERSE OF SEAL OF WILLIAM I  
(British Museum)

recognize him King to the Angles). The robes of peace are very similar to those worn by the saintly Edward, and consist of a long under-tunic and mantle fastened by a brooch at the shoulder.

A second seal was used by the monarch, owing possibly to some accident to the former. The horse in this die has



no saddle, and there are a few other minor points of difference. This seal was no doubt that used by William II until the years 1094-6, when a matrix was executed for him. In this the king in war is relegated to the reverse, while his robes of peace are fully displayed upon the obverse. Above the long tunic is seen the dalmatic, shorter than the under-robe and with wider sleeves; the mantle is not fastened upon the shoulder, but immediately in front. The crown is now represented with five points; its fastening chinstraps are left hanging loosely on either side of the head. The other regalia are the sword of justice borne erect in the right hand, and a long-shafted cross borne in the left. The reverse calls for no very special notice. The king wears a hauberk of mail with a conical cap to which a nose-piece is attached; the sword hangs at the left side, but the principal weapon of offence is the long lance. The shield has not altered in form and is still kite-shaped. The legend is very simple and repeated on both sides of the seal: + WILHELMVS Domini GRatiA REX ANGLORum (William, by the grace of God King of the Angles).

Henry I (1100-35) changed his seals frequently. We can scarcely tell why. There is always the possibility of loss or fracture, or even of forgery; for some or all of these reasons none of his seals had a long life. The earliest type closely resembles that of his predecessor; upon the obverse he is shown in the same royal robes and holds the same regalia, and even on the reverse the armour does not materially differ. The horse has, however, a neckband fringed with bells, while on his lance flag is a cross moline. The second seal so called differs only in very minute details, but the examples known, namely those at Durham Cathedral, are mere fragments.



For three years (1103-6) Henry used another (Birch's third) seal. Upon this the king is represented in his coronation robes, with a long tunic reaching to the feet, a dalmatic slit up the front and ornamented with bands of embroidery, and over these the royal mantle looped up on the shoulder and secured by a brooch. The king is shown



OBVERSE OF GREAT SEAL OF WILLIAM II  
(British Museum)

on the reverse in panoply of war, mounted, as usual, on his war-horse, and wearing a cap-like helm. The lance flag has no device. Almost at the same date yet another seal was in use, distinguished from that we have just mentioned by the cross pattée on the lance flag.

The so-called fifth seal is very similar, and was in use from 1124-33. It has a notable distinction, that of two ornaments in the field of the obverse. These are balls or



orbs, from which rise eight-rayed stars. The legend also, which has hitherto been identical on both sides of the seal, now varies its style, the obverse giving the title King of the Angles, the reverse, Duke of the Normans. The seals of Stephen (1135-54) are two in number, and of much the same character as the later one of his prede-



REVERSE OF FIRST SEAL OF STEPHEN  
(British Museum)

cessor; the royal vesture is similar to that on the third and fourth seals of Henry, and only differs, in that the cross on the orb is surmounted by a bird which may be a dove. The armour worn is similar to that on Henry's fifth seal, and consists of a hauberk and coif of mail with a cap-shaped helm, behind which the thongs for fastening the coif may be seen. The shield is long and kite-shaped, the sword is broad and short, with a heavy ball



pommel. The prick-spur and mail-clad foot, curiously like a claw, are worth notice. In the second seal, used about 1144, there is a less ornamental throne, but to balance this the royal mantle is enriched with embroidery, and caught up on the right shoulder. In the field is a radiated star of seven points. The king is armed, on the reverse, with a lance, the pennon of which has four streamers, and is embroidered with a cross pattée. The legend is similar in style to that of Henry.

With the accession of the House of Plantagenet much of the archaic simplicity of the earlier seals disappears, and greater lightness and delicacy of execution is found; the drawing is also better, with some knowledge of anatomy. Henry II, like his predecessor of the same name, was lavish with seals, and four varieties are recognized. The earliest of these bears a general resemblance both to those of Stephen and of Henry I, but the reverse presents a number of new details. Thus the shield is now shown suspended by a strap passing round the king's neck, and the hauberk of mail looks as though the original were formed of separate rings of metal sewn on the leathern suit. The rings were of course interlaced, but this was probably beyond the power of the engraver to reproduce. On the horse's head is a kind of veil of mail, the forerunner of the more modern chamfron. The king's titles in the legend are also augmented. The whole reads: HENR: DEI: GR̃A: DUX: NORM: . . . ET. AQVIT: ET COM: ANDEG: (in English, Henry, by the grace of God Duke of the Normans . . . and Aquitanians and Count of the Angevins).

The second seal of the king shows a considerable falling off in execution, and differs only in slight details,



and these principally upon the reverse. The horse has fringed and decorated trappings, and the words of the legend are more fully extended, thus: ANDEGAVOR. for ANDEG.

The seal, considered to be the "third" seal of this king in the British Museum catalogue, seems open to a good deal of suspicion. No impression of the reverse is known, and that of the obverse in the museum is "believed to be derived from a leaden matrix found in an advanced state of decay."<sup>1</sup> The fourth seal is also a "negligible quantity," or nearly so, as no copy of its obverse is known. Obviously one would suppose the two belonged to one another, but their diameters do not coincide. This fourth seal appears to be a coarsely executed copy of the second.

Richard I (1189-99) used two extremely interesting seals. Upon both of these the obverse is occupied with the figure of the seated king in his coronation robes, enthroned in state. These robes consist of a tight-sleeved tunic reaching to the feet, a dalmatic, with wide, short sleeves worn above it, and over all the royal mantle fastened by a band across the chest. The throne is more richly treated than has hitherto been the fashion, and has a series of arcaded panels. While prominent in the field, on either side the broom-slip badge appears, together with the symbols of unceasing watchfulness, the sun and moon symbolizing day and night, the royal eye watching over the subjects both sleeping and waking. The crown is formed of three fleur-de-lis, and the orb is continued into a floreated cross, while the sword of justice is held sceptre-wise in the right hand. The reverse is yet more

<sup>1</sup> "Cat. of Seals," i. 12.



interesting, the shield shows on its bowed outline a lion in the usual heraldic position, rampant. The position of the shield makes it difficult to see whether the engraver meant to convey the idea of a single lion or two engaged in combat. It would be an interesting point to clear up, but one we can scarcely hope to settle without more evidence than is now possessed.



REVERSE OF SECOND GREAT SEAL OF RICHARD I  
(British Museum)

The second seal used after 1191 is even more important (see figure). The broom badge is no longer in request, but the symbols of watchfulness—the sun and crescent moon—are still seen on the field. It is, however, the reverse that is so specially interesting, since it is the earliest example known of the use of coat-armour on the seal of a



sovereign. The king is in the usual position, mounted, with shield advanced and brandished sword. The king wears the flat-topped helm of the period, barrel-shaped with an *ocularium* and surmounted by a fan-shaped crest, a slit hauberk of mail with mittens of the same material, and long flowing surcoat. His body is covered with the large pointed shield on which is plainly seen the three lions of England. The military saddle is raised both before and behind, and the snaffle of the bit is peculiar. The horse is so well drawn that the engraver seems almost to have had some structural knowledge of anatomy.<sup>1</sup> This is the last seal on which the title *Rex Anglorum* appears; after this date *Rex Anglie* takes its place.

The single seal of King John (1199-1216) is much like that of his brother. On the obverse the king is represented seated and vested in his coronation robes, and bearing the sword and cross-topped sceptre. The legend, however, differs in that the new title "Dominus hibernie" finds a place; it reads: + JOHANNES : DEI : GRATIA : REX : ANGLIE : DOMINVS : HIBERNIE (John, by the grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland). The effigy on the reverse is scarcely altered. We see the same barrel-shaped helm, the same shield and sword. The legend reads: + JOHNS : DUX : NORMANNIE : ET AQUITANNIE : ET : COMES : ANDEGAVIE (John, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, Count of Anjou).

Henry III (1216-72). A series of seals now begins of which it may reasonably be hoped to find examples in most muniment rooms, and hence the interest in them may perchance be enhanced; the more so since they are in themselves works of art often of great beauty. They

<sup>1</sup> Cott. ch. xvi. 1.



also certainly help to trace the revolution in artistic ideas, as seen in the architecture of the time—a movement which learnt how to construct, and changed the massiveness of the old Romanesque for the graceful lines, bright lights, and deep shadows of Early English work. As has been already said, the seal of the Regent sufficed for the first three years of Henry's reign. The young king's first seal represents him (see figure) seated upon a low, ottoman-like stool, which has a front enriched with sunk panels containing lions' masks, and separated from the padded seat by an elaborate cornice carved with wyverns. The royal robes are very skilfully draped. He wears the usual long tight-sleeved tunic, a dalmatic with wide short sleeves, and the royal mantle fastened by a cord across the chest. The crown is of the triple type, composed of a hoop and three fleur-de-lis. In his right hand he holds the sword of justice, and in his left the orb of sovereignty, from which rises an elegant cross-topped sceptre, the stem delicately wrought to resemble flowers. The reverse is of the usual type, the king upon his war-horse. The royal armour consists of a hauberk of mail, leggings of the same character, and a linen surcoat girded round the waist. For defence he carries the usual large shield of the period bearing the lions of England, and for offence a long broad sword with straight quillons and a wheel-shaped pommel. The flat-topped helm is surmounted by a royal crown. The seal was in use until it was superseded by Henry's cession to France of the duchy of Normandy and the countship of Anjou. The treaty was signed 20 May, 1259; by this the English monarch renounced his rights *en le duche et in tote la tere de Normandie et en la conte et en tote la tere d'Anjou*.



The seal of 1260 shows for the first time the disuse of the Norman stool for the Gothic throne ; the details of its ornament are more suggestive of Romanesque influence than of the Pointed style, but the crockets and pinnacles of the latter appear. The orb is less elaborate, and the sword is replaced by the sceptre-with-the-dove. The only change in the vesture is the fastening of the royal mantle—not by a cord, but by a brooch on the shoulder. The reverse varies but little ; there is, however, a return to the prick-spur in lieu of the rowelled type. The titles on the legend read : REX ANGLIE DOMINUS HYBERNIE DUX AQRVITANIE.

Edward the First (1272–1307) used at first, in all probability, the seal of his predecessor, but no copy of this appears to be known. His so-called first seal is that of Henry, but with the name altered—*Henricus* replaced by *Edwardus*. A specimen is appended to a charter bearing date 28 January, 1298. It was thus in use during the king's absence abroad from November, 1297, until March, 1298.

The seal engraved for the king is one of extreme beauty. On the obverse the sovereign appears in his coronation robes, seated upon an elaborate Gothic throne, while beneath the footboard and on either side are lions executed with great spirit, perhaps so placed as symbols of kingly power. The robes consist of the tight-sleeved tunic and royal mantle fastened at the right shoulder. The crown is triple-pointed of three fleur-de-lis rising from the circlet, while the king carries the sceptre-with-the-cross and the rod-with-the-dove. The armour of the king upon the reverse varies very little from that of the last sovereign. The hauberk and leggings of mail were still in use, but leather kneecaps, etc., were beginning to become fashion-



able. The surcoat was still worn. The most notable difference is in the shield, which has become much smaller and is almost triangular. This form is usually called "heater-shaped" from its close resemblance in outline to the domestic flat-iron. The lions of England are seen upon it and also on the bardings of the horse. There is no alteration in the royal style or titles.

Economy must have been the rule during the reign of Edward II (1307-27), as that sovereign was quite content to use his predecessor's seal, with the simple addition of the badge of Castile, a small castle, over the lions on either side of the throne: a graceful allusion to his royal mother, Eleanor.

Edward III (1327-77) supplies us with a longer series of seals than any other English king, since eight distinct varieties are recognized. The earliest of these was in use for but ten months, viz. from January to October, 1327-8. It is in all respects similar to that which we have already seen did duty for Edward the First and his son, but just as Edward II added the castle of Castile, so Edward III added the fleur-de-lis of France. The seal was disused 4 October, 1328.

The new seal did duty from 1328-36. It is of this seal Mr. St. John Hope<sup>1</sup> says:—

It is uncertain whether any of the seals of Edward III represent him in his coronation robes. The first that was made for him shows him crowned and enthroned wearing a tunic or surcoat, and a mantle, fastened in front by a brooch, but this mantle has a hood, and is so disposed over the knees as to more or less hide the under vestments. The hands are certainly gloved. In the right is a short rod surmounted by leaf work, or a bird with spread wings, and in the left an orb with a very short cross.

<sup>1</sup> "Ancestor," I, 147.



On the whole it would seem that a very free treatment has been allowed, but that the coronation robes are intended to be represented. The king upon his war-horse on the reverse has few peculiarities. The helm is crowned, and the sword fastened to the wrist by a chain. There is also a slight difference in the legend.

The succeeding seal shows the monarch seated either in his coronation robes or his robes of estate. These appear as a girded tunic, and the royal mantle fastened on the right shoulder by a brooch. In his hand the king bears the rod-with-the-dove and the sceptre-with-the-cross. The space below the throne, usually filled up with a footboard, is now ornamented with foliage, and in the field the shield of England takes the place of the fleur-de-lis badges. It was in use during the king's sojourn in Flanders, 1338-40.

The fourth seal of the series is of special heraldic interest; it was only used for a short time, namely from 1 March until 30 June, 1340. It can be readily distinguished by the bracket which projects from the tabernacle work of the throne, and supports the royal arms, a quartered coat, which now makes its first appearance in accordance to Edward's claim to the French throne. The shield may be blazoned azure, powdered with fleur-de-lis of gold, or azure semée of fleur-de-lis or. The legend also lays claims to France: EDWARDUS: DEI: GRACIA: REX: FRANCIE: ET: ANGLIE DN̄S: HYBERNIE: ET: DVX: AQUITANIE (Edward, by the grace of God King of France and England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine). The reverse shows that a revolution in armour has set in. The surcoat is still worn over the hauberk of mail, but plates of metal are now affixed to the exterior of the arms



and legs, and the feet are themselves encased in jointed plates. Those on the legs are known as *cuisse genoulières* and *jambes*, those on the arms as *brassarts*, *demi-brassarts*, and *coudières*, and the feet guards as *sollerets à la poulaine*. The large helm is surmounted for the first



REVERSE OF THE FOURTH SEAL OF EDWARD III  
(British Museum)

time by the royal crest, the passant lion. The heater-shaped shield bears arms, differing from those in the field in showing but three fleur-de-lis, but possibly the engraver could hardly find room for more in a quartered coat. Fleur-de-lis vieux agneis on the bardings of the horse, and in the diaper work of the background.

It was used from 23 June, 1341-7, and very closely re-



semples that we last described. It varies, however, in some few details. Thus on the obverse small figures of men-at-arms are shown on the battlements of the canopy, and the *manus Dei*, the finger of God, appears within the legend.

The sixth seal is perhaps the most handsome of all the series. The throne upon which the king is seated is an entirely new design. The canopy work is altered, and although the watching men-at-arms are present, yet they are differently disposed. The monarch's crown is of a new type, with five points, and the cross on both the rod and sceptre are floriated. The heraldic decorations remain the same, and badges are used in the legend, the older colon being replaced by pairs of roses, the initial cross having a fleur-de-lis within four roses on each side of it. Curiously enough, after the word FRANCIE is a human face with long hair in place of the colon. Is this meant to emphasize Edward's claim to the French throne? The most artistic seal of the whole series is the seventh. According to Mr. St. John Hope,<sup>1</sup> the obverse shows the king in his robes of estate, viz. a tight-fitting tunic fastened up the front by a jewelled band, and a mantle with a richly wrought border, fastened at the neck with a brooch or morse in the manner of a cope. Mr. Hope adds: "No later monument nor great seal of an English king represents him in his coronation vestments." The seventh seal represents the king enthroned in his robes of estate. The throne is surmounted by a canopy, in the centre of which the effigy of the Holy Mother with the infant Christ appears, and these are again seen on the right hand of the canopy, where the figure of St.

<sup>1</sup> "Ancestor," I, p. 148.



George occupies a corresponding situation on the left. The sides are elaborated with tabernacles, the inner and larger containing shields of arms, viz. France ancient, quartering England; the outer, figures of watchers. The reverse is contained in a cusped border of most intricate design.

The eighth and last seal of the king differs only in the addition in the legend of the words REX FRANCIE, after DEI GRATIA and the omission of the words ET AQUITAINNE; the former had been resigned by the Treaty of Bretigny-lez-chartres, 8 May, 1360, whereby the English monarch renounced his claim on the French crown and gave up the possessions of the House of Anjou north of the Loire. The latter was not assumed, since the duchy was no longer an English possession, having been overrun by the constable of France, who, it will be remembered, had annihilated the English fleet, then under the command of the Earl of Pembroke, in 1372.

The economy of Richard II (1377-99) is shown by the fact that he used his predecessor's seal, without troubling to have one expressly made for him.

The troubled state of the country during the reign of Henry VI (1422-61) led to an exceedingly interesting series of great seals, peculiar both in size and in their departure from the normal type. In his early years he was as economical as his immediate predecessors, and made use of the same matrix which had already done good service for Henry IV and his successor, although he had for the sake of distinction taken the precaution to add a small quatrefoil in the cusped bordering. After a time we have a seal of entirely different type. Upon its obverse the king appears as a demi-figure, holding a sceptre ter-



minating in a fleur-de-lis, with the sceptre of justice in his left hand, i.e. the rod surmounted by a *manus Dei*. This demi-effigy appears above an embattled wall in the centre of which is a pointed entrance flanked by lions supporting the shield of France modern (three fleur-de-lis), and the quartered shield of France and England, both of which are surmounted by the royal crown. The inscription



SEAL OF ABSENCE OF HENRY VI  
(British Museum)

reads: + SIGILLUM : REGNINI : IN : ABSENTIA : MAGNI : ORDINATUM (The Seal of the Kingdom, ordained in the absence of the Great (seal)).

The reverse is merely a small counter or privy seal, an angel holding the two sceptres mentioned above, and flanked by the armorial ensigns of the two kingdoms.

In the next, which is known as the "fourth seal," there



is a reversion to the usual type, and the king is represented seated in his robes of estate upon a throne placed beneath a triple canopy; the two sceptres he bears are headed respectively by the fleur-de-lis and the cross, the former for France, the latter for England. The legend gives the king's titles as "King of the French and of England." The counter-seal used for reverse is very similar, though not identical with that of the last seal. The chief difference is the presence of a small three-leaved flower beneath the shields of arms. A fifth seal came into use about the year 1425, but it is really not a seal of England at all, but a seal of dignity of Philip of Burgundy, and came to be affixed to English state documents merely as a matter of necessity; it is nevertheless of interest. The equestrian figure of the duke is shown in full armour of the period and occupies the obverse. The horse upon which he is mounted is richly caparisoned, the bardings bearing the fleur-de-lis. The privy seal of the duke is utilized as a counter-seal; it is small and circular, and bears the ducal coat of arms. Ten years later, another seal, obviously a seal of absence, is found. On the obverse King Henry appears seated on a throne and holding a rod with the *manus Dei* in his left hand, while at his feet are attendant lions. On the reverse is the impression of a counter-seal, small and circular with the device of two angels supporting between them the royal arms.

The last seal of this king was made about 1440, and represents the king in his robes of estate crowned with a three-pointed crown, and bearing a sceptre in the right hand, and the rod with the *manus Dei* in the left. The king wears a long flowing robe, and on either side of the



throne are the shields of France and England. There is no true reverse, only a counter-seal, small and round with an angel in an albe holding in the right hand the shield of France, in the left that of France and England quartered. From the above it will be seen that there is no great seal of this monarch at all approaching the usual type. The examples we find are either, as has been said, makeshifts due to emergency or seals of absence.

Edward IV (1461-83) reverts to the seal of the last king of his name, taking as his model that monarch's first seal, but the failure of the copyist is deplorable; as Birch says in his "Catalogue of Seals," "the whole appearance of the design is inferior both in conception and execution." The second seal of Edward is likewise a copy, this time of the last seal of Edward III; but the details are slightly altered: thus the angel below the footboard of the original is replaced by a half-length figure, with wings, holding a cloth. The arms are those of modern France, not the more artistic earlier coat. The birds above the shields are now replaced by a bunch of roses, and the canopy work is less graceful and considerably altered. The reverse chiefly differs in the diapering; in the copy the field is covered with quatrefoiled spaces containing badges, the *rose-en-soleil* and the *suns* of the Yorkist party. The third seal is entirely new. It shows the king crowned in his robes of estate, seated beneath a canopy with a long cross staff in his right hand, and a sceptre with a reliquary in his left, on either side of the central figure are armorial compartments, and outside these other spaces with men-at-arms or warders. The stops between the words of the legend take the form of fleur-de-lis, and the colon at the end is formed from two roses. The



reverse is much altered ; the helm has a large plume of ostrich feathers, while the armour is full plate, and the horse is shown galloping over a foreground of rough earth dotted with what may be meant for rabbit-holes. The background has a lozengy diaper with roses in the interstices and fleur-de-lis and lions' masks on the points of intersection. The stops in the legend are either fleur-de-lis or roses arranged, the former singly, the latter colon-wise.

The fourth seal represents the king on the obverse in full plate armour, and crowned with a five-pointed crown, wearing in place of a tabard the royal mantle. Above his head is an heraldic rose, and below his feet are lions, while the arms in the side compartments are placed between badges. The outer compartments are filled with warders—one bearing a banner, the other a lance. The reverse has a figure of the king in armour, mounted on a horse, with a peculiar saddle. The foreground is dotted with rabbits.

The seal attributed to Edward V (9 April to 25 June, 1483) differs only in a small detail. The reliquary at the top of the sceptre is replaced by a star.

Richard III (1483-5) adopted the matrix of the third seal of Edward IV, but made a change of name, erasing EDWARDUS and substituting RICARDUS.

The great seal of Henry VII (1485-1509) reverts to the type sanctioned by long precedent. On the obverse the king is seen in his robes of estate, crowned, and holding the orb and sceptres, while upon the canopy are the arms of France and England. The inevitable watcher is still present, armed with a javelin ; on either side of the foot-board is a rose slipped and barbed. The reverse shows



the king mounted, wearing the elaborate armour of his date, with the ugly Tudor tabard worn over it, embroidered with the royal arms. The bardings of the horse are also enriched with armorials, and the background diapered with the royal badges of France and England. The foreground is dotted with flowers and rabbit-holes. There is also a seal for French affairs of this monarch, similar to those of Henry VI, and, like them, using a counter-seal for reverse.

The first seal of Henry VIII (1509-47) is really that of his predecessor, with small additions; thus, the new king added a lion badge above the tail of the horse, and a fleur-de-lis over that animal's head. This was in use from his accession until 1532, when a new die was engraved. The obverse of this second seal, which continued in use till 1541, represents the sovereign in his robes of estate, crowned with the hooped crown, which is surmounted by a small cross, and bearing sceptre and orb. The throne upon which the king is seated has a dome-shaped canopy, with the royal arms placed within the ribbon of the garter. The whole design is contained in a border composed of roses and fleur-de-lis, while the stops in the legend are four pointed mullets.

The armour shown on the reverse is of the richly chased and fluted type then in vogue. The helm plumed and crested, and the horse armed with a spike projecting from the chamfron. A feature of interest is the elaborate embroidery of the steed's housings, in which the badges of France and England appear entwined with delicate foliage. In the foreground is a greyhound, and in the field above the horse's tail the well-known badge called *rose-en-soleil*. It is on this seal that the title "Defender



of the Faith," conferred on Henry by Leo X in 1521, first appears. It is a little amusing that this arch-enemy of Rome should value the papal title highly enough to insert it upon his great seal when he had thrown off all allegiance to the source from which the title sprang. The seal, apart from all else, is remarkable, since it is the last which is treated in a Gothic spirit. The third seal (1542-7) shows the sovereign vested in his garter robes, with cloak, collar, and chain, but crowned, and holding orb and sceptre. He is seated upon a Renaissance throne, with a shell canopy above it, and the arms, as before, encircled by the garter ribbon on either side. The reverse, bearing an equestrian effigy of the king, is principally remarkable for the stiff folds of the petticoat-like tabard. The caparisons of the horse are exceedingly rich.

Henry VIII is the only English sovereign who used a golden bulla. This he did either in mere ostentation or because of its ancient use by the emperors of the Roman Empire in the East; it is well known that such a bulla, very handsomely wrought, was affixed to the charter signed by Henry and Francis of France, 1520. It is of special value, since it illustrates the early influence of the Renaissance movement, which had been felt in England as early as the reign of Henry VII, and had reached a position which secured for it wide acceptance long before 1520. The golden bulla represents Henry in flowing robes of estate, with cloak and tippet, crowned with the arched crown, and holding the sceptre with the cross grasped firmly in his right hand, while the orb with a large jewelled cross rests on his left knee, and is supported by the hand. He is seated upon a shell-backed throne, with pilasters in the Corinthian style on either side, and



the whole wreathed with “swags” of roses and foliage, the ends of which are entwined by *amorini*, who stand upon well-shaped two-handled vases. The footboard has a shield charged with the double rose badge, and supported by *amorini*. The inscription reads: HERIC'S .D.G. ĀGLIE · Z · FRĀCIE R. FIDEI, DEFĒSOR · Z · DÑS HIB. (Henry,



REVERSE OF THE GOLDEN BULLA OF HENRY VIII

(British Museum)

by the grace of God King of England and France, Defender of the Faith, Lord of Ireland). The reverse is also very beautiful; there is no hint of war, but a large shield, France modern quartering England, with obtuse base, crowned with the arched crown, and surrounded by a chain, the royal badge of the Tudor rose, each encircled by the garter ribbon, and fastened together by true lover's knot. The lowermost badge has the garter pen-



dant, the George, affixed to it. The legend has roses for stops between each word, and reads: . ORDINE . JUNGVN TVR . ET . PERSTANT . FEDERE . CVNCTA. (All things conjoined by order stand firm through treaty.) It is probably the best specimen of seal-engraver's art the time could produce.



OBVERSE OF THE GOLDEN BULLA OF HENRY VIII  
(British Museum)

Edward VI (1547-53), pending the cutting of his seal, used, as others before him had done, that of his father. A year later, in 1548, the new die was complete, and presents several important alterations in detail. The delicacy which marked the early Renaissance movement was beginning to wane before Dutch and German influence, and the result is seen in the heavy character of the throne with its canopy, which is represented carved in a shell-



like manner ; the tester also is curtained, and the scroll work quite in accordance with the newer mode. There is a long inscription in Latin, of which the English version reads thus : "Edward the Sixth, by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and in these realms Supreme Head of the Church of England and Ireland." The obverse represents the king, as usual, mounted upon horseback, in an elaborate suit of armour, with a plumed helm, flowered housings, and armorial bearings. He is accompanied by a greyhound. The field of the seal is decorated with foliage, fleur-de-lis, and badges.

Mary I (1553-8) used for a while her brother's seal without substituting her name for that of Edward, but as soon as possible had a new matrix engraved. This seal, the first in our series of a queen, naturally presents some new and interesting features. On the obverse Mary is represented seated upon a throne attired in her robes of estate vested in the royal mantle, crowned, and holding the orb and sceptre. The throne has a circular back but a square tester, and is ornamented on its armpieces with lions. The rose-badge is in the field on the queen's right, and upon her left the quartered shield of France and England ; both these are, as heralds say, "ensigned" with the royal crown, and bear the motto : *TEMPORIS FILIA VERITAS* (Truth is the daughter of Time). The legend is less full than that upon Edward's seal, and may be translated : "Mary, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, of this name the first, Defender of the Faith." A fleur-de-lis commences the inscription and the stops between the words are either quatrefoils or colons. The queen is seen on the reverse seated upon horseback in



robes of estate. The horse's saddle-cloth is powdered with the badges of Castile and Aragon, viz. castles and pomegranates in allusion to her mother, and behind the horse is a large fleur-de-lis. The royal marriage set aside this seal, and one very elaborate and beautifully designed took its place; but as usually happened during its preparation, the old seal continued to be used; this was completed in 1556. On the obverse the king and queen appear seated in their robes of estate beneath a canopy. The king is vested in a loose tunic girt in round the waist with a girdle, and above this he wears a furred cloak with tippet; in his right hand is the sword of justice. The queen also appears in robes of estate wearing the crown and holding a sceptre. Between the royal pair is a small altar lettered P.M and surmounted by an orb and cross. Above this is placed the shield of Spain and its quartering impaling that of France and England. The legend reads, in English, "Philip and Mary, by the grace of God King and Queen of England, Spain, France, and of both the Sicilies, Jerusalem, and Ireland, Defenders of the Faith." This is continued on the reverse, where we find Archduke (plural) of Austria, Duke (plural) of Burgundy, Medina, and of Brabant, Count (plural) of Hapsburg, Flanders, and the Tyrol. On this reverse both effigies also appear and both on horseback, the king fully armed, the queen in robes of estate. The housings of the horses are diapered with the royal badges of England and Spain—castles, roses, fleur-de-lis, and roundels—which also reappear, together with pomegranates, upon the diaper work of the field.

Elizabeth's long reign (1558–1603) gives to our series two seals. The earlier, which was executed almost imme-



diately after her accession, shows Her Majesty seated upon her throne in robes of estate. The throne itself is in the Renaissance style, curtained and canopied. She is robed in a skirt and polonaise, over which is worn the royal



OBVERSE OF FIRST SEAL OF ELIZABETH  
(Warwick Castle)

mantle and a somewhat large ruff, while the crown itself is peculiar and composed of small crosses. On either side of the central figure are the royal arms within the garter ribbon ensigned with crowns. The effigy upon the



reverse shows the queen on horseback with richly embroidered skirt and polonaise, long stomacher, ruff, and sceptre, and in the field sprays of roses and also crowned badges of the fleur-de-lis and rose. The legend is simple : "Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith." This seal was in use during the long chancellorship of Bacon, and upon his resignation of office he was allowed to keep it. It is said that he therewith caused a cup to be made which bore for inscription :—

*A thynde bowle made of the great seale of England and left by Syr Nycholas Bacon Knight Lord Keeper as an Heyrloome to his house of Stewkey.*<sup>1</sup>

The second seal of the queen (1586-1603) shows her, as before, in royal robes as sovereign of the garter, but is peculiar in that the cloak is supported by two hands issuing from clouds. Badges again play a considerable part in the ornament ; on the reverse the crowned harp of Wales appears side by side with the English rose and French fleur-de-lis, while over all the glory cloud is seen with radiant beams. In the stops of the legend, bezants occur in possible allusion to Cawdor, Earl of Cornwall, whose mythical arms are said to be ten bezants.

James I (1603-25) also used two seals, the earlier of which is scarce (1603-5). The king is shown on the obverse as sovereign of the garter, with crown, orb, and sceptre, and, like his predecessor, wearing the collar, mantle, and tippet of the order. In the armorial decorations the imaginary arms of Cadwallader and of Edward the Confessor are displayed upon pennons, while the

<sup>1</sup> This cup was recently sold in London, and fetched £2500.



principal shield is a quarterly coat, the first and fourth quarters occupied by France and England quartered, the others by Scotland and Ireland. The legend reads: JACOBUS DEI GRACIA ANGLIÆ, SCOTIÆ, FRANCIÆ ET HIBERNIÆ REX FIDEI DEFENSOR. Roses are used for stops between each two words. On the reverse the old type is retained; the king is in full armour, with crowned and feathered helm, and among the flowers of the foreground the now usual greyhound is seen. The matrix was slightly altered for the second seal by replacing the flat canopy of the former by a circular projection.

Charles I used for his first year the seal of James, but in 1626-7 a new matrix was cut. The king appears as on that of his predecessor in garter robes, wearing a ruff collar with long strings. The curtains of the Renaissance shell canopy are upheld by semi-nude figures on either side, while a lion and unicorn support the banners of St. George and St. Andrew. The legend is cut upon a raised rim. The reverse shows the king in full plate armour, his helm heavily plumed, while the bardings of the horse are finely embroidered, and the back of its neck protected by armour plates (*poitral*). The background is diapered, and the usual greyhound appears. The third seal, used from 1627-40, is much the same in general design, and differs on the obverse in small details only. The reverse has a distant view of London Bridge with the river and St. Paul's. The fourth seal is really merely the first state of the fifth, which in its complete form was used 1644-8. Striking differences appear in the design of the throne and the cherubic supporters to the royal shield. In the first state the date 1640 appears above the canopy; in the perfect form it is given as 1643.



The reverse closely resembles that of the third seal, but the horse has no girth.

The great seal of the Commonwealth is of an entirely new and quite distinct type. The matrix was ordered by Parliament, 9 January, 1648-9, and the old seal commanded to be broken in pieces on 7 February following, but it is somewhat doubtful if this so-called first seal was actually used, since the second seal immediately followed. The obverse of both is occupied with a map of the British Isles, with a fleet of war-vessels in "the British sea," and a shaped shield (with the cross of St. George upon it) in the sea between England and Ireland, and in base a similar shield of Ireland. The later of the two types has a dolphin placed beneath the shield of Ireland. The legends reads: THE · GREAT · SEALE · OF · ENGLAND · 1648. The reverse shows the House of Commons in session, with the legend: IN · THE · FIRST · YEARE · OF · FREEDOME · BY · GOD'S · BLESSING · RESTORED · 1648. The borders of the two seals differ. The former is beaded, the latter has outer circles with cross and harp alternating with curved ornaments.

The seal of the Protector has an armorial device; namely the arms of England, the cross of St. George, Scotland, the cross of St. Andrew, and Ireland, surmounted by an escutcheon of the arms of Cromwell, viz. a lion. The crest is the ancient crest of England; the lion passant and crowned, upon a royal crown, while the supporters are on the right. A crowned lion, on the left a dragon, while below is the motto: PAX QUERITUR BELLO. The legend reads: MAGNUM · SIGILLUM · REIPVB · ANGLIÆ · SCOTIÆ · ET · HIBERNIÆ, etc. (The great seal of the Republic of England, Scotland, and Ireland, etc.)







The seals of Richard Cromwell are two in number, i.e. if we count his father's seal, which was used by him without alteration in 1658. In the second seal (1659-60) a few



REVERSE OF THE SEAL OF OLIVER LORD PROTECTOR  
(British Museum)

details have been retouched, the sword lengthened, and the word REIP. in the legend written in full.

Charles II (1649-85) used four seals, of the first of which very little is known, enough merely to show that it differs in details from any other. It was apparently



in use between 1649-53. The second seal, which was in use during the next eleven years (1653-64), is of the usual type, but with a remarkably small crown. Its details in some parts are taken from the 1640, 1643 seals of Charles I; above the canopy is the date 1653. The reverse is also of the usual type. Its heraldic decorations consist of an ensigned rose by the horse's head, and an oval shield of the royal arms within the garter. The third seal (1664-74) is extremely ornate, and armorial badges play an important part in the design. It shows the king in his robes of estate, seated upon a throne with a shell-shaped back, and two couched lions at the base, and behind them three pennons, displaying on the right St. George and the dragon, an ensigned rose, a crowned thistle, and on the left the Union flag, with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew, a crowned fleur-de-lis, and a crowned harp. Above the canopy are the arms of Great Britain, supported by winged *amorini*. On the reverse the king is shown in classical armour, his head wreathed with laurel, while a view of London is seen in the background. The fourth seal (1674-85) is very similar, but the arms and *amorini* are below, and not above, the canopy. At the sides are *two* eagles, each holding the union flag, while above them on pedestals are busts.

James II (1635-8) altered the busts on the obverse of the last seal to female figures, to whom the task was given of holding the curtains of the canopy. The reverse shows the king on horseback in the so-called classical style.

The seal of William III and Mary II (1689-94) drew its inspiration from that of Philip and Mary I. The king and queen are shown seated in their robes of estate, with a small column between them bearing the orb on which



the right and left hands of the joint sovereigns respectively rest. On the column are the letters G.M crowned; on either side of the group are lions supporting pennons, while above, under a seat-like canopy, are the royal arms with the addition of those of Nassau. The reverse gives both king and queen in classic costume, with a distant view of the Thames and London. This seal was used for some while after the death of Mary, pending the completion of a new die. This, when it appeared, was, generally speaking, much like that of James II. The king is seated on a carved throne, with a shell-shaped back and canopy, its curtains supported by female figures, while overhead are the royal arms supported by winged cupids, who also support the crown. On either side of the throne the lion and unicorn hold flags with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew. The reverse shows the king in the usual classical armour, which had then been some little while in vogue. This seal was also used by Queen Anne some time after her accession.

The so-called second seal of Anne varies considerably in device from those of the sovereigns we have just considered. She wears, as usual, robes of estate and is seated upon a throne, but the canopy is circular-headed, and the lion and unicorn on either side support shields charged with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew; above these are figures—Piety with a church, and Justice with scales and fasces. In front of the canopy are the royal arms supported by angels blowing trumpets. The reverse shows the queen on horseback in robes of estate with crown, orb, and sceptre. The foreground is ornamented with foliage, the trappings of the horse scalloped and fringed, and its tail is tied with ribbons. The principal



difference in the third seal (1707-14) is the alteration of the robes of estate for those of the queen as sovereign of the garter, and a change is made in marshalling the shield of England, which is now arranged, viz. England



OBVERSE OF SECOND SEAL OF GEORGE I  
(British Museum)

impaling Scotland. The stops are, alternately, roses and thistles, and the two appear grafted upon a single slip at the end of the inscription. The reverse is, however, of an entirely new type. It gives us the figure of Britannia



seated at the foot of a precipice holding in her right hand a tasselled lance, and in her left the royal shield. In the field is a rose and thistle spray ensigned by a crown. The third seal continued in use during 1714, and is thus called the first of George I. The "second" seal of that monarch is of the usual type, viz. the king enthroned in robes of the garter, with the figure of Mercy on his right and that of Justice on his left. The armorials introduce in the fourth quarter the tierced coat of Hanover, viz. the two passant lions of Brunswick, a lion on a field sprinkled with hearts for Luneburgh, and in point a horse courant for Westphalia, and above all the badge of electoral dignity, the crown of Charlemagne. This coat is supported by angels blowing trumpets. On the reverse is the king in war panoply with peculiar armour; the earlier view of London and the Thames is retained. The legend, giving the German titles, reads continuously on either side, viz. GEORGIUS DIE GRATIA MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ FRANCIÆ ET HIBERNIÆ REX FIDEI DEFEN. BRUNSWICEN ET LUNEBERGEN DUX SACRI ROMANIS IMPERIS ARCHITHESAURARIUS ET PRINCEPS ELECT. ETC. (George, by the grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and Luneberg, Arch-treasurer of the Holy Roman Empire, and Prince Elector, etc.).

George II (1727-60) has a seal even more classical in conception than that of his predecessor. On either side of the enthroned king are allegorical personages. On the right hand Hercules with a club, Plenty with her cornucopia, and Minerva with shield and spear, and on the left Great Britain with sceptre and shield of arms (England impaling Scotland), and a figure of Innocence,



at least it is assumed to be so, with a lamb. Beneath the throne is a prostrate figure of Envy; behind a Corinthian colonnade supports the royal arms. On the reverse the king appears in classical armour, with the usual view of



REVERSE OF SEAL OF GEORGE II  
(British Museum)

London and the Thames. The legend is similar to that of his father. As had hitherto been the case, the seal continued in use after the accession of George III.

The "second" seal of George III represents that king



seated in profile within six allegorical figures, viz. Justice, Peace, Learning, Strength, Victory, and Plenty, and overhead the royal shield and crown, palm-branch, and cornucopia. On the reverse is the king in plate armour, his hair dressed in a queue, upon a background representing the city of London. A third type of seal differs only in small details, and but one mutilated specimen is described in the museum catalogue. A fourth seal, which began to be in use about 1765, and was not used after 1800, very much resembles the one described above; but the shield of Victory has the royal arms prior to the union with Ireland, while in the cornucopia is placed a bunch of flowers, perhaps meant for the rose, shamrock, and thistle. The reverse is not materially different, but the king's hair is tied behind the neck, and the holster has a pistol.

The fifth seal of the king is once again very similar. On the obverse the allegorical figures reappear, but are posed differently, and Victory's shield has the crosses of the union, viz. those of St. Andrew and St. George. The legend is varied, and on the reverse the king is seen in a field-marshal's cloak worn above his armour with a baton. The legend corresponds with that on the obverse. The sixth is identical with the fifth, save for the alteration in the royal arms. Those of Brunswick, Luneberg, and Westphalia are now consigned to an escutcheon placed above the royal shield, in which the third quarter is occupied by Ireland. The seventh seal is a variant. The attendant figures, so says Birch,<sup>1</sup> represent Britannia and Faith on the left, and on the right Wisdom, Justice, and Power, while in the base a classical rudder appears

<sup>1</sup> "Cat. of Seals," I, p. 79.



with a palm branch. The legend is also widely different from that on the preceding seal.

George IV (1820-30) strays from the usual type somewhat. Although he retains the allegorical figures of his father's seal, yet they are differently placed. On the right side they are probably meant for Justice and Mercy, on the left for Wisdom, but entirely new personifications appear, placed before the king, viz. Britannia, Caledonia, and Hibernia. Moreover, the place of the legend is occupied by a border of oak and laurel, etc. On the reverse the king's armour is an antiquarian return to medievalism, but his head has a laurel wreath, and his hand holds the marshal's baton.

The seal of William IV (1830-37) is distinguished by the king wearing above his robes of estate the collars of the garter, the bath, and the Guelphic orders. We still have many personifications: on the right hand, Minerva or Learning, Peace with her myrtle bough, and Plenty with her horn; on the left Neptune, to represent dominion over the seas, with Religion and Justice. In the base a caduceus, twined with rose, shamrock, and thistle. There is no legend, nothing but a wreath of oak leaves. The reverse offers a new type. The king is on horse-back, wearing the mantle of the garter, with a baton in his hand, walking his horse beside a quay, with two battleships in the background, while in the exergue is a trident wreathed with laurel.

Her late Majesty used at first the seal of William IV, but her own (first) seal was shortly ready, and upon it she is represented seated in her robes of estate, wearing the collar of the garter, between figures, also seated, of Justice and Faith. In the exergue the royal arms appear, and



the whole is bordered with roses, oak leaves, and acorns, in lieu of a legend. On the reverse Her Majesty appears on horseback in royal robes. The horse is led by a page in a feathered cap, while in the exergue is a trident crossed by oak boughs.

The second seal of Victoria was used from 23 January, 1860, until the 14 August, 1878. It is identical in type with its predecessor, as is also the third seal, used from that date until May, 1900.

The fourth seal of Her late Majesty was issued in the year 1900. The obverse represents the queen seated, in robes of estate, upon a throne with a shell-backed canopy, the elbow-pieces resting on lion supports. On either side is a low wall, decorated with circular reliefs, and bearing on the right the figure of St. George and on the left that of St. Michael. The canopy is crowned with floral trophies. The inscription runs: VICTORIA · DEI · GRATIA · BRITT · REGINA · FID · DEF · IND · IMP. The reverse represents the queen seated upon horseback, and holding orb and mace; the reins rest loosely upon the horse's neck. In the distance is a view with ancient and modern battle-ships, and below in exergue a trident between two dolphins. The royal arms, within the garter ribbon, are in the field above the horse's flanks. The border contains the rose, thistle, and shamrock badges in a cusped frame, and above is a motto scroll. An experiment was made of using gutta-percha with the beeswax of which the impressions were made, and this accounts for the poor colour and great weight of many specimens. Diam.  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in.

This seal was used by His present Majesty until the year 1904, when a new seal, not much improvement on the former, came into use (see frontispiece). It bears on



the obverse a seated figure of His Majesty, in his robes as sovereign of the garter, holding a sceptre in his right hand and grasping the orb with his left. His feet rest on a rectangular cushion, and on either side are the emblematic figures of Britannia holding a sailing vessel, and Justice with sword and balance; while on either side of the upper part of the throne are figures of St. Michael and St. George. The legend runs: EDWARDUS VII : D : G : BRITT : ET TERRARUM TRANSMAR : QVAE INDIT : SUNT BRITT : REX. F : D : IND : IMP. The reverse represents the king in his robes festal, with war vessels in the background and the royal arms with motto in the field. Overhead is the legend DIEU ET MON DROIT, and below a trident. While the upper part of the border is composed of the rose, shamrock, and thistle, the lower part bears the names of colonies upon scrolls intertwined with foliage.



## CHAPTER III

### PRIVY SEALS OF SOVEREIGNS AND THOSE OF THE ROYAL COURTS

THE privy seal of the sovereign is a far smaller instrument than the broad seal of dignity we have hitherto been considering, and is necessarily of a more private and personal nature, as indeed its name implies. Occasions are not, however, entirely wanting when special exigency required its use in place of the more important symbol of dignity, but it is usually affixed solely to authorize the employment of the great seal, and hence specimens are rare, the warrant rarely straying beyond the office in which the patent is prepared, and both it and the seal are alike destroyed when their work is completed. In spite, however, of this fact, specimens are known, and the British Museum has many examples. From them we gather that the stereotyped design is that of the royal shield with a legend in the margin, such as *SECRETUM RICHARDI REGIS FRANCIE ET ANGLIE* (The privy seal of Richard, King of France and



COUNTER-SEAL OF THE THIRD  
SEAL OF HENRY VI  
(British Museum)



England), which is found on that of Richard II. James I used two types upon his privy seals. The earlier has the badge of the *rose-en-soleil* with the king's name and titles around it, but in 1621 reverts to a shield of arms supported by lions seated on either side, together with the ostrich-feather badge and the letters I.R.; and the type thus set was generally followed by the later sovereigns.

The Duchy of Lancaster has an interesting series of seals of its own. Those of earlier date give the principal place to the arms assigned to the duchy, which are in reality those of Henry, first Duke of Lancaster, viz. the quartered coat of England differenced by a label, which label was afterwards charged with three fleur-de-lis. The shield is generally placed between ostrich feathers, but these are not held by the seated lions, which appear upon the privy seals. Under Mary the feathers are charged with the letters M.R.D.L., which stand for Maria Regina Ducissa Lancastriæ (Mary, Queen, Duchess of Lancaster). Under Elizabeth the feathers bear the letters I.C.D.N. (Ich Dien); under James I there is a reversion to initials, which, however, are placed not upon the feathers, but in the field. James II added greyhounds supporting single ostrich feathers to either side of his shield, in uniformity with his privy seal.

We find under George IV a completely new type. The king is now represented (as in his great seal) enthroned and wearing his full regalia. On either side the lion and unicorn hold banners with the royal arms and those of the duchy, while in base is a wreath of the national flowers. The duchy seal of Her Majesty Queen Victoria is of similar type, but allegorical figures of Faith and Justice are added on either side of the throne. The reverse



follows the old type with a coat of arms, ostrich feathers, and crest, and the legend: SIGILLUM: DUCATUS: LANCASTRIÆ; a letter seal with the arms within a garter is also used. Besides these, Her Majesty used a special seal for the county palatine of Lancaster with her equestrian figure as Britannia on the obverse, and the Lancastrian rose ensigned with a ducal coronet. On the reverse are the shield of the duchy and the legend: SIGILLUM COMITAT. PALATIN. LANCASTRIÆ.

#### SIGNETS

Of a more private nature than even privy seals are those known as "signets." In modern practice, warrants signed by the sovereign and countersigned by the Secretary of State or Lords of the Treasury are called sign manuals. These warrants, directed to the attorney or solicitor general, require those officials to prepare a bill for royal signature. When once prepared it is signed by the law officer and the sovereign, and is called "a signet bill," which is taken to the "Signet Office," where an attested copy is made, addressed to the Lord Privy Seal. To this copy the sovereign's signet, one of the seals in possession of the Secretary of State, is affixed. A similar copy, sealed with the privy seal, is sent to the Lord Chancellor. "Signet seals" are thus rarely found astray from the public records, and even the collection in the British Museum is very defective. The usual type is that of a shield of arms, with the royal crown between the initials of the sovereign. Henry V, however, placed his shield between palm branches. Richard III surrounded the shield with a collar of roses, with "the George" pendant therefrom. Henry VIII used a collar of SS, while



Charles I encircled his arms with the garter. The signet of Oliver Cromwell shows a shield of six quarterings, Cromwell, Caradoc Vreichfras, Collwyn ap Tangno, Jeotyn ap Gwrgant, Prince of Glamorgan, Madoc ap Meredith, Prince of Powys, and Murfyn, surmounted by his family crest, a demi-lion holding a fleur-de-lis. James II used a simple monogram, J.M.R., beneath a crown; while William and Mary had two sizes, the larger of the usual type, the smaller a monogram, W.M.R., crowned and supported by *amorini*. The remaining sovereigns followed the usual type.

The ancient Courts of the Exchequer and the two benches had seals of their own, and could issue writs running in the sovereign's name, summoning juries, coercing litigants, or carrying out judgments, but their scope was not great,<sup>1</sup> but these seals in that they often occur in private collections and muniment-rooms deserve special attention.

Those used from the time of Edward I to Henry VII are of a uniform character; indeed Henry V and VI, Edward IV, Henry VII used the *same* seal, as did Henry IV. The seal of Edward I represents the king on horseback in a hauberk of mail; the trappings of the horse are plain, but it has a breastband. On the reverse is a shield of the arms of England. Richard II used a seal similar to that of his successor, Henry IV, which, like that of Edward, represents the king in mail on horseback, bearing a shield of arms, France ancient and England quarterly. The horse is armed in mail, and has armorial caparisons and plumed headstall, while the border is cusped. The legend reads: HENRICUS: DEI: GRA: REX:

<sup>1</sup> See "Mait. and Poll.," I, p. 194.



ANGLIE : DÑS : HIBERNIE : & : AQUITAÏE. On the reverse the same shield of arms appears within a double quatrefoil, the triple towered castle is also introduced. The legend reads : + SIGILLUM DE SCACCARIO · DOMINI · REGIS · (Seal of the Treasury of our Lord the King). As we have said, this matrix was in use till the death of Henry VII, when it was copied by an inferior artist, and the shield of France modernized ; the armour was also altered to the full plate of the period. A second exchequer seal of the same sovereign reverts to shirt of mail, round bascinet, and rowel spur. The horse is also shown armed, while on the reverse an heraldic antelope and a stag support the shield. The legend, SIGILLV SCACARII DOMINI REGIS, is cut in the mount in foreground, and about the margin run the words: IN TERRA ECCLESIE ANGLICANE ET HIBERNIE SUPREMUM CAPUT (On earth, of the Church of England and Ireland, supreme head). Henry's seal did duty for his son, with the name changed. Philip and Mary used an exchequer seal in the style of their great seal. They appear seated with the orb between them, with a legend giving their name and titles, while upon the reverse are the arms of Philip impaled with those of Mary. Elizabeth also follows this type, and is shown enthroned in robes of estate, with a canopy above her, rising in shell form from four corner posts. On the reverse is a shaped shield of arms, and for supporters the antelope and stag. James I and Charles I vary in no important particular from this type. In that of James II the supporters are a goat and a stag. And these are also found in the circular seal of George I and II.



## COURT OF THE KING'S BENCH

Lewis says, "The precise period at which the Court known as Curia Regis lost its title and merged into that of the King's Bench does not appear." In the third year of Edward I it is called by this name; but the Curia Regis had a seal of its own as early as 1160. The King's Bench dealt with a very wide range of matters, such as



OBVERSE OF THE SEAL OF THE COURT OF  
THE KING'S BENCH  
(Warwick Castle)

assizes, attainders, grants to corporations, agreements in various actions, enrolment of deeds, fines, heirship, rebellion, liberties, prerogative, and local customs. But the series of seals given in the museum catalogue is very imperfect, and does not begin until Henry VI. The type then in vogue displayed the king enthroned with the inscription:

HENRICUS : DEI :  
GRACIA : REX : ANG-  
LIE : ET : FRANCIE :

and upon the reverse the arms of France ancient quartering England, and ensigned with a lion's face between two fleur-de-lis, with the completion of the



legend : SIGILLUM : PRO : BREVIBUS . . . (Seal for briefs). The seal of Henry VIII is four inches across, and represents the king seated on a renaissance throne elaborately carved with eagles' claws, lions' heads, wings, roses, and fleur-de-lis on small shields, while the reverse has the royal shield supported by the crowned lion and wyvern, and the legend : S. PRO BREVIBUS CORAM NOS. 1543 (Seal for briefs heard before us). The seal of Edward VI has for supporters to the shield a lion's head and griffin, and the S. is extended to SIGILLUM. That of Charles I is similar, but the carvings on the throne consist of the crowned lion, an eagle, and a cherub, while on either side of the centre composition are a rose and fleur-de-lis both crowned. The Commonwealth has on the obverse the Lower House of Parliament in session ; on the reverse a shield of arms between palm branches. That of Charles II shows the king in robes of estate seated beneath a shell-backed canopy, with crowned lions on either side, and eagles holding chaplets of flowers and fruit. The legend reads : CAROLUS II. D.G. MAG. BRIT. FRAN. ET HIB. REX. FID. DE.

#### THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

rose out of the Exchequer Court, and was guaranteed by the Magna Charta as confirmed by 25 Edw. I. c. 11. Like the other bench already dealt with, it had a seal of its own at an early date. Here again the museum catalogue does not help until we reach Henry VI, when there is a type existent that must have been in use since 1405, as the arms of France ancient appear. This type represents, as in the sister court, the king seated with full regalia and the legend : EDWARDUS : DEI : GRACIA : REX : ANGLIE : ET FRANCIE, and on the reverse a large shield of



France ancient quartering England and the motto : + SIGILLUM : PRO : BREVIBUS : CORAM : JUSTICIARIIS (Seal for briefs before the justices). This type is followed by Henry VII and in the first seal of Henry VIII. In the second seal of the latter monarch the arms are modernized and supporters, viz. a lion crowned and a collared greyhound, are introduced, the inscription reading: HENRY VIII. DEI GRACIA ANGLIE FRANCIE ET HIBERNIE REX FIDEI DEFENSOR ET IN TERRA ECCLESIE ANGLICANE SUPREMUM CAPUT (Henry, by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and on earth of the Church of England, supreme head); and on a scroll: SIGILLUM PRO BREVIBUS CORAM JUSTICIARIIS. The stops between the words of the former legend are five foils. The seal of Edward VI is of Renaissance design; the panels of the sides of the throne are carved with winged fauns, and above the canopy is a marine deity with "finny arms"; badges of the usual type are also introduced, and the stops in the inscription are mullets. On the reverse the shield is displayed between curtains held by the supporters. The seal of Mary was first identical, and probably the same as that of Edward; but she had a second seal with vases on either side of the throne holding a rose tree and pomegranate tree in fruit. On the reverse she added to the inscription the words: CUIS NOMINIS PRIMA FIDEI DEFENSOR (The first Defender of the Faith of this name). This was also used after her marriage with Philip. The new seal, however, represented both the king and queen enthroned, the former with a sword, the latter with a sceptre; and the field is adorned by badges in the diaper work and larger devices of the castle and fleur-de-lis. The reverse has the royal arms



with supporters, a crowned eagle and collared greyhound; the legend recites the full titles.

Elizabeth keeps to the usual type, seated on a throne in robes of estate, with on either side the *rose-en-soleil* and fleur-de-lis, each ensigned by a crown. The supporters to the royal arms are a dragon and greyhound. The architectural details of her successor were those of the time; we see the shell-shaped back, curtained canopy, and reeded roof to the throne, and the half-length figures of *amorini*. The badges in field are a rose and fleur-de-lis all upon a background of lozenge spaces with quatrefoils. On the reverse the shield is much the same as that of his predecessor.

The Commonwealth departs from the usual type to show us the interior of the Lower House in session, with a cross on a shield below. On the reverse is a map of Great Britain and Ireland with the legend: SIGILLUM PRO BREVIBUS CORAM IUSTICIARIIS COMMUNIS BANCI 1648. The seal used by Charles II has nude figures of children supporting the royal arms and holding garlands of flowers above the royal canopy. That of Queen Anne has allegorical figures of Britannia and Justice and cherubs blowing trumpets. George I retains these figures, but adds the lion and unicorn.

#### THE COURT OF WARDS AND LIVERIES

This court was established by the statute 32 Henry VIII. c. 46, and abolished by that cited as 12 Car. II. c. 24. It was founded to remedy the extortions of the creatures of Henry VII. The seals used by the court are of interest. That of Henry VIII has the royal shield upheld by naked children, and the legend: HENRICUS DEI GRA'



ANGLIE FRANC' ET HIBERNIE REX. ECCLESIE ANGLICAN' ET HIB' SUP'ME' CAPUT. Those used by Edward VI and Mary are of similar type, but in the latter the badge of the united lily, pomegranate, and rose is found, while on a scroll in the foreground the words PUPILLIS ORPHANIS occur. The legend reads: MARIA · DEI GRA' ANGL. FRANC. ET HIBERN · REGINA · FEDEI · DEFENSOR. The stops are fleur-de-lis. Elizabeth used a similar type, but placed on the scroll the words: PUPILLIS ORPHANIS ET VIDVIS ADIVTOR (The aid for young orphans and widows).

The first seal of Charles I shows the king on horseback in full plate armour with long plumes, but the reverse is of the usual type. The letters C.R. occur on either side of the royal arms. Charles II's seal is similar, but has a view of the city of London upon the obverse.

#### AUTHORITIES

Papers on the great seals of English sovereigns will be found as under:—

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Edward the Confessor. "Archæologia," XVIII, 19.

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William II. "Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.," XXVIII, 129.

Henry I. *Ibid.* XXIX, 233.

Richard I. "Archæologia," XXVI, 461; and XXIX, 43.

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Edward III. "Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.," II, 14.



## CHAPTER IV

### SEALS OF THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

GENERALLY speaking, the seals of ecclesiastics of high rank are of oval form, that known as *vesica piscis* or *en ogive*. This peculiar shape is frequently said to be derived from the use of the fish symbol in the Catacombs, but this is open to question. The oval seal lends itself well to the commonest type, that representing the prelate in the act of benediction, in the later examples beneath an elaborately traceried canopy, the tabernacle work of which is designed in the true spirit of pointed architecture, and enriched with statuettes of saints and shields of armorial bearings. Such is



SEAL OF ST. ANSELM  
(British Museum)



the general type, but the variations usual to the age are present, and stamp a personality upon even the individual seal, which may be dated not only from its legend, but from the pose of the figure, the fashion and shape of the vestments, and the character of the minor accompaniments.

Episcopal seals are of four classes: (*A*) seals of dignity, equal in importance to the great seals of the kings; (*B*) counter-seals, performing some of the uses of the sovereign's privy seal; (*C*) secreta, or private and purely personal seals; (*D*) seals *ad causas*; and (*E*) seals for special purposes.

Of these, Class *A*, the seal of dignity, was used for charters, all documents concerning the rights and property of the see, and also to authenticate copies of deeds, bulls, or other instruments of like importance. Class *C*, the *secretum* or *sigillum privatum*, was used for matters connected with the prelate's private estate, his correspondence, and sometimes as a counter-seal. Class *D*, the seal *ad causas*, was appended to copies of acts of court, letters of orders, probates, marriage licences, testimonials, and such-like documents of a minor importance. Class *B*, the counter-seal, was merely a safeguard. Its purpose is sufficiently well explained by that of Richard, Bishop of Winchester, A.D. 1174, which bears the words: SUM CUSTOS ET TESTIS SIGILLI (I am the keeper and witness of the seal).

The seal of a new bishop was subject to an interesting ceremony, that of benediction, before it passed into use. The form of this service is haply preserved in the Evesham Pontifical.<sup>1</sup> It runs as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> Lansd. MSS., 451.



*Benedictis Novi Sigilli Episcopalis**Vers. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.**Resp. Qui fecit.*

*Oremus. Benedic, Domine Jesu Christe, istud sigillum, in testimonium veritatis paratum, et concede per intercessionem beatæ Mariæ virginis et matris tuæ, et sanctorum apostolorum tuorum Petri et Pauli, ut et ipse in cujus officium et usum exercebitur, et qui ejus nomine eodem utentur, sic justitiæ et veritatis regulam teneunt, et turpis mori nemini resperant, ut pro temporati labore perpetuam a te purcedem consegñi mereantur. Qui vivis, etc.*

On the death of the prelate the seal he had used was destroyed, and there is a note of such an event in a Durham Inventory. The bishop Richard Bury died in 1345, and his four silver seals were broken and the fragments used for making a silver-gilt chalice for the altar of St. John the Baptist. This destruction of matrices accounts for their rarity.

It must not be forgotten that the first secular seals used in Christian times were antique gems. We find them as early as the reign of Eadgar, and as counter-seals their use by ecclesiastics is most frequent. It may be of interest to mention a few of these. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury (1139-61), used a bearded head which may have been meant for Jupiter by its engraver. Stephen Langton used a gem with a device representing two cupids, one mounting a ladder by a tree; while Archbishop Boniface (1245-70) introduced no less than four gems into the obverse of his seal of dignity: three of these are figure subjects, the fourth is the head of Jupiter Serapis. The fashion set by the primate was naturally followed by his diocesans. Thus Bartholemew, Bishop



of Exeter, used for his counter-seal a gem with the figures of Thetis and Achilles. The motto, + CREDE DUOBVS (Believe us both), refers to the double impression of the reverse and obverse, and the equal trust to be placed in both. Robert Foliot, Bishop of Hereford (A.D. 1174-86), had an antique counter-seal: upon this a lion is represented hunting a stag; while that of Robert, Bishop of Lincoln (1148-67), used the yet more peculiar gryllus—in this case the monstrosity consisting of human head, an eagle, a horse's head, a trident, and part of a snake. Are we to see in such forms as this the origin of the grotesque figures so dear to the late medieval sculptor?

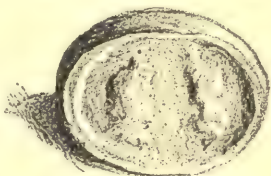
The counter-seal of William, Bishop of Llandaff, is probably Christian in origin. There is a long cross between the heads of the two apostles SS. Peter and Paul and the text: IN ORE DUORUM AUT TRIUM TESTIUM STABIT OMNE VERBUM<sup>1</sup> (Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established). Some of these legends were an addition, rendering Christian a pagan design. Thus William de Turbe, Bishop of Norwich (1146-74), used a gem with a female bust, but added the text: + IUSTUS EX FIDE VIVIT<sup>2</sup> (Let the just live by faith). The same idea of alteration prevailed when the monks of Durham added the motto—CAPUT SANCTI OSWALDI (The head of St. Oswald)—to a gem with the head of Zeus, and when those of Selby made the head of the Emperor Honorius into that of Christ by the simple addition of the words: CAPUT NOSTRVM CHRISTUS EST (Our head is Christ). Yet more interesting is the transformation of Fortune holding a winged Victory into Our Lady and the Infant Saviour, used by Walter, Archbishop

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Hab. ii. 4.



of York. The alteration was effected by the addition of the words of angelic salutation: + AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA (Hail, Mary, full of grace). It was certainly remarkable that heathen deities should appear upon the seals of Christian bishops, and yet stranger that heretical gems should do so too, although it is very possible that acquaintance with the tenets of gnosticism was not one of the strong points of twelfth and thirteenth century bishops. It will, however, occur to some that when the tomb of Hubert de Walter, who died in 1205, was opened, a ring was found formed of the green stone known as *plasma*, and engraved with a gnostic figure, a serpent with rays of light proceeding from its head, and the legend: KNOPHIS. It is said that Pope Innocent III, in consequence perhaps of this very use of gnostic gems, ordered that bishops should henceforth use rings with plain stones.<sup>1</sup> This, however, may refer only to the ceremonial ring, which was part of the vesture of the prelate, but in any case the use of antique gems in seals does not survive the close of the twelfth century. The example here figured forms the counter-seal of the seal of dignity of Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester.



COUNTER-SEAL OF HENRY  
DE BLOIS  
(British Museum)

When the use of heraldic ensigns commenced they proved admirably adapted to the seal-engraver's art—a fresh and exceedingly beautiful means of ornament. The earliest known example on an ecclesiastical seal is that of the lions of England on the seal of Walter, Bishop of Worcester (1308). In late examples,

<sup>1</sup> “Arch. Journ.,” XX, p. 216.



shields of arms are found suspended upon the standards of the tabernacle work ; and when, yet later, the effigy of the owner is transferred from the centre to the base,

the shield of his personal arms accompanies him, and in time supersedes his figure altogether.



SEAL OF HENRY DE BLOIS,  
BISHOP OF WINCHESTER  
(British Museum)

The readiest method of dating a seal, if a fragment only is left, is in the disposition of the central space, and the style of the vestments worn. Special attention may very well be given to the pastoral staff, an ornament which came into use as early as the fourth century, and in its original form was perhaps a mere walking-stick, and as such was long retained by Celtic prelates. The earliest form appearing

upon the seals is that of a short baculus similar to those in use by Roman augurs, and, like them, was held in the hand. These, however, show a fully developed volute, as upon the seal of Richard, Archbishop of Sens.<sup>1</sup> But during the twelfth century the shape is gradually lengthened until it becomes almost as long as its owner is high. The volute then springs from a knob of foliage. In the thirteenth century the staff is still

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, "Eccl. Her.," p. 62.



longer and, in unison with other work at the time, becomes far more ornate, the volute terminating in greatly enriched foliage, and the knob is similarly treated. In the fourteenth century the crook becomes a veritable group of small canopies and throne-work enriched with crockets and pinnacles, and containing statuettes of saints. The length is then slightly in excess of the owner's height. In the succeeding century all sense of proportion is lost. The staff becomes absurdly long, the crook ridiculously heavy. Now and then, though rarely, the primatial cross replaces the pastoral staff, but only in archiepiscopal or legatine seals.



SEAL OF RICHARD, BISHOP OF  
COVENTRY, 1161-83  
(Warwick Museum)

Another "ornament" of great use in dating seals is the mitre, which did not become at all general until about the tenth century. It was at first a linen bonnet fastened at the sides, but by the commencement of the twelfth century we can see from seals that this round form became raised into lobes or horns at the sides immediately above either ear. The more ancient type is seen on the seal of Henry of Blois already mentioned. This prelate presided over the see of Winchester from 1129-71, and his seal is of such importance that it is here figured. The side-lobed mitre is seen on nearly all the



seals of late twelfth and early thirteenth century bishops ; for instance, upon that of Robert de Chesney, Bishop of Lincoln, 1148-67. The bonnet strings, formerly used to fasten the linen covering, have ere this become mere ornamental appendages, and are usually represented hanging loosely. Side by side with this innovation



SEAL OF ROGER DE MEULAN,  
BISHOP OF COVENTRY, 1288-96  
(Warwick Museum)

sprang up a new type of mitre, which makes its first appearance upon the seal of Hugh, Bishop of Durham, 1153. In this type the point of the mitre is placed in front. It was, however, for some time unfashionable, and not generally followed for fifty years or more. When the fashion is at length prevalent, the mitre assumes very elegant proportions, at once simple enough to be in good taste, and rich enough to follow ceremonial needs. But in the fourteenth century, the peaks begin to be elevated, a decadence com-

mences, and for the next two centuries the mitre is a monstrosity, not an ornament. It reaches its lowest depth in the seventeenth century, when swollen sides and overlaid decoration mark the general decay in taste.

The mitre and pastoral staff are not the only ornaments which aid us. The amice and albe, tunicle and dalmatic, and above all the chasuble, are important points. As a rule the albe is short in very early seals, the chasuble sharply pointed. With the later specimens it is fuller,



and its folds more graceful, and at the same time the albe is longer than it could comfortably be worn, and falls in studied folds about the feet. The pillar cross in the front of the chasuble is conspicuous by its absence, and the only cross upon a chasuble known to the writer is that on the seal of Anthony Bek, Bishop of Durham 1284-1311, which covers the whole front of the chasuble, but is merely heraldic, and derived from the cross sarcelly of his family. It may be noted in passing that coats of arms were used, and that commonly, not only on the sacred vestments, but upon the frontals and other hangings of the altar, and were very far from being considered mere badges of human pride. After the seals of royal persons, none are of more absorbing interest than those which belong to the higher ecclesiastics, and of these the series used by the



SEAL OF ROGER DE NORTHBURGH,  
BISHOP OF COVENTRY, 1322-60  
(Warwick Museum)

Archbishops of Canterbury and York naturally take the first place. The oldest known was used in 1093, and from that early date the series is unbroken to our own time. The difference between the early instrument and the modern makeshift is striking; the former is a work of art, the matrix skilfully and carefully engraved, the impression made on a sturdy mass of beeswax, which, given certain conditions, is well-nigh indestructible. The



modern dies are flat and poor, the wax mere sealing-wax or worse, and it is rare to find a good impression showing even a moderate amount of detail in the present-day seals, even when they are not altogether discarded for stamped

paper.

Quite recently some of the English bishops returned to medieval models for their seals of estate, and the result is pleasing. Such seals as those of the present Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of Bristol and Worcester,<sup>1</sup> and some others, have figure seals, cut with great skill and considerable spirit. It would be well if their good example were more generally followed.

There is no better guide to the dates of episcopal seals, or indeed those of any other class, than the



SEAL OF THE BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM  
AS BISHOP OF WORCESTER

character of the lettering of their legends.

Mr. Hope's exhaustive paper of 1887 on English episcopal seals gave the following six types of successive lettering:—

"1. From Osbern (Exeter, 1072) to Thomas à Becket (Canterbury, 1174): Roman capitals, which almost insensibly change into

<sup>1</sup> Now of Birmingham.



2. From Richard (Canterbury, 1174) to Walter de Gray (York, 1215): A kind of rude Lombardic.
3. From Josceline (Bath, 1206) to Thomas de L'Isle (Ely, 1345): Good Lombardic.
4. From Thomas de Hatfield (Durham, 1345) to *circa* 1425: Bold black-letter.
5. From *circa* 1425 to 1500: Fine close black-letter.
6. After 1500: Roman capitals."

Archiepiscopal seals, as we have seen is the case with those of the sovereign, follow definite types, the individual owner altering detail only; moreover, the further we go back, the less tendency we find to stray from type. The Canterbury seals may well be treated under the following heads, the design named occupying the place of most importance in the field of the seal.

1. Effigy of the archbishop standing.
2. Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury.
3. Our Lord with attendant saints.
4. The Holy Trinity.
5. The crucifixion.
6. The resurrection.

The earlier seals follow the first of these types. Upon them the primate is seen standing full-face and wearing the pallium over his other vestments, the short pastoral staff in his left hand and the right hand raised in benediction. An exception occurs in the seal of Anselm (see figure); here the Gospel Book takes the place of the pastoral staff. The seal of Ralph de 'Scures (1114-23) shows the loose lappets of his mitre, but this, as we have seen, is usual. The standing figure is used by the archbishops one after another for a long period, namely,



until the primacy of Simon Sudbury (1375-81), when it was temporarily disused to be once again adopted on the first seal of Archbishop William (1504-32). These effigy seals lend themselves to considerable variation in treatment, and from the archaic simplicity of Anselm they rise to the elaborations of later times. Tabernacle work is freely added, figures of saints, shields of arms, and, as we have already said, in the case of Archbishop Boniface even the introduction of heathen gems.

The popularity of Archbishop Thomas, a faithful martyr for the cause of the Church, grew with time rather than diminished, and the use of his martyrdom on the Canterbury seals was certainly a very gradual matter. It appears on the counter-seal of Hubert Walter (1193-1205) enacted beneath an arcade with the legend: \* MARTIR : QUOD : STLLAT : PRIMATIS : AB : ORE : SIGILLAT (O martyr, who fell as primate, seal with thy mouth). This is copied by Archbishop Richard (1229-31). But the scene of the murder is under a trefoiled arch and is inscribed : RICARDUM : DOCEAT : MORS : MEA : NE : TIMEAT (Let my death teach thee, Richard, not to fear). Boniface adds to the device a representation of the martyr's soul ascending to God with the legend : + TRINE : DEVS : PRO : ME : MOVEAT : TE : PASSIO : THOME (O Triune God, let the suffering of Thomas move Thee for me). From this time many variations occur, but it is not until Sudbury's primacy that this type was placed upon the obverse of the seal ; but it thus occurs on that prelate's seal *ad causas*. The martyrdom is framed as it were in a cinqfoiled arch, while above in the canopy-work is a figure of the Holy Trinity (a majesty) surrounded by the Church triumphant ; quite below in the basement the archbishop kneels in



prayer. William Courtenay (1381-96) discards the Becket type, and it is used for the last time by Thomas Arundel, his successor.

The third type, our Lord with attendant saints, is not at all popular, and is in fact used but once, namely, by William Courtenay, who held the see from 1381-96. In the centre is the figure of our Lord in divine session holding the orb of majesty and with His right hand in act of benediction ; while overhead in the tabernacle work is the Holy Mother and the Infant Jesus, and the statuettes of SS. Peter and Paul, the effigy of the archbishop, in accordance with the then prevalent fashion, humbly kneeling in prayer.

The fourth type, the majesty or figure of the Holy Trinity, is more frequent. It does not, however, appear until the primacy of Henry Chicheley (1414-43), but it was used by his successor, John Stafford, by Thomas Bourchier (1456-86), and on the second seal of Warham and the first of Cranmer. There is not much to be said about the composition of these seals, but at that period the cultus of the Holy Trinity was markedly popular. Altars arose in its honour, and "majesties" were introduced in the groining of roofs, in stained windows, and elsewhere in great profusion, while symbols representing the Triune Godhead are just as frequent.

The fifth type, that of the Passion of our Lord, occurs on but one seal—the third of Archbishop Cranmer ; the central design is accompanied by kneeling figures, and coats of arms are also introduced.

A sixth type was used by Mathew Parker (1559-75). The principal place is taken by our Lord seated in divine session, as on that of Archbishop Courtenay, but around this we have various other scenes. In base the general



resurrection; on the right hand Satan thrusting wicked souls into hell; on the left the building of the New Jerusalem. Such designs as these lose all the dignity and richness of earlier examples by overcrowding, and thus contracting the proper proportion of the principal figures. Laud's seal is another departure scarcely more satisfactory. In the upper part is the eye of God, below the hand of blessing issuant from clouds and holding a scroll inscribed *SURSVM*, while beneath this are the private arms of the archbishop.

There is no necessity to repeat what we have said about the counter-seals introducing the martyrdom of Becket: before, however, this came into fashion, other designs occur. Archbishop Theobald (1139-61) used an antique gem with the legend: + *SIGNUM* + *SECRETUM*. Archbishop Richard (1174-84) had a seal of oval form with the *manus Dei* for device. While immediately before the "Becket" series, Archbishop Baldwin (1184-90) had a standing figure representing an archbishop, probably himself.

The ring seals are yet smaller, and we have no space to enter fully into their nature. It may be said that many are of interest, notably such as that of Simon Sudbury, a long cross and the letter *s* interlaced within a Gothic frame, and the *IHESVS : EST AMOR : M̄S* (Jesus is my love).

Some few of the archbishops had seals called by Birch "official,"<sup>1</sup> such as that of Courtenay, representing our Lord in majesty. He had also a privy seal, or *secretum*, in imitation of royalty, with the inscription: *SIGILL. SECRETU. DN̄I : WILLI. COVRTENAYE*. The series of signets begins with John Stafford; the device the prelate's surname and an eagle rising; most other signets are armorial.

<sup>1</sup> Br. Mus. "Cat. of Seals."



The various archiepiscopal courts had each a series of seals peculiar to itself, and in this way the Prerogative Court, the Court of Arches, Faculty, the Commissioners for the Approbation of Public Preachers, the Court of Audience, and Vicar-General, etc., all had seals.

The Prerogative Court of the archbishop is that great court in which the rights he held in common with all his diocesans became intensified to such a degree that whenever a testator held property in more than one diocese, probate was to be sought in the archbishop's court, who, be it remembered, "was no mere metropolitan, but primate, and often legate as well, so that his peculiar rights were exceptionally extensive and comprehensive." Sims does not treat of these courts ecclesiastical in their separate functions, but his general deductions will suffice for our purpose. He says,<sup>1</sup> "The jurisdiction conceded to them extends properly over wills, matrimonial disputes of all kinds, questions of Church rates and churchwardens, brawling in churches, defamations, maritime causes, certain immoral offences, and the dereliction of clergymen from church discipline." The law governing these matters is the ancient canon law, exceedingly complex and difficult to unravel.

These seals of the archiepiscopal prerogative are oval in form, and, prior to the Reformation, vary considerably in device; but the lines seen on the seals of dignity of the primates are followed. We have the standing effigy, the old device of Becket's martyrdom, in the later examples with the accompanying shields of arms, as in the seal of Cardinal Pole. The second seal of Cranmer represents the scourging of the Redeemer; that of Mathew Parker

<sup>1</sup> Sims' "Manual," p. 69.



the disputation with the doctors in the Temple, a design adopted also by Grindal, Whitgift, Laud, and Juxon. The rights of the archbishops were alienated by the Protector, who used for his seal a large shield of arms. The normal form of legend reads: SIGILLUM CURIÆ PREROGATIVÆ CANTUARIENSIS ARCHIEPISCOPI (The seal of Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury). There is no reverse, strictly speaking; its place is taken by impressions from the ring seals of the several commissaries.

The Court of Arches for the trial of cases of clerical discipline, etc., also uses an oval seal as a deanery. This has in the upper portion the demi-figure of our Lady, and below the dean offering the holy sacrifice. The legend reads: S' DECANAT' DE ARCUB' LONDON (Seal of the Dean of Arches, London). Very similar is the seal of the commissary-general, namely, a figure or demi-figure of the Holy Mother with beneath it the effigy of the dean kneeling in prayer. After the Reformation we find, as in that of Bartholemew Clerk, LL.D. (1588), the figure of the official seated upon his throne. Like the last-named court, the reverse is plain, save for the impress of the private seal of the commissary by way of counter-seal.

The Court of Faculties for granting marriage licences, etc., is not represented in the national collection; indeed no special effort seems to have been made in the British Museum to procure anything like an exhaustive series of English seals, or even of casts. There is nothing earlier of this court than a very interesting wafer-seal of Cranmer, representing Moses lifting up the brazen serpent, with the motto MUNDVS TRANSIT and the arms of the see. On the reverse is a representation of our Lord's Passion with



a text from St. John xvii. 3. This type has been generally followed by the later archbishops, with the exception of Pole, whose device is heraldic: a shield of arms ensigned by a cardinal's hat and the legend: R. POLUS. S. R. E. CARD. A LATERE LEGATUS.

The commissioners for the approbation of public preachers, a court existing only under the Commonwealth, used a shield with the arms at that time assigned to the realm, and the inscription: "THE · SEALE · FOR · APPROBATION · OF · PUBLIC · PREACHERS." It had certainly no artistic merit.

The chancery general of the see had a device alluding to the popular martyr, St. Thomas, the bust of the saint between two swords, and in the space below the figure of the chancellor in prayer with coats of arms, and the inscription: SIGILLUM: CANCELLARIATUS: CANTUARIE: GENERALIS (Seal of the Chancery-General of Canterbury). Cranmer placed the crucifixion as his central device, with his own figure below engaged in prayer.

The Court of Audience of Mathew Parker had a seal representing the prelate enthroned with two attendant officials, and his arms and those of his see beneath, together with the royal Tudor badge, the *rose-en-soleil*. This seal has a curious counter-seal, a  $\delta$ , a skull with its jaws holding a thigh bone, and the text: MIHI · HERI · ET · TIBI · HODIE (For me yesterday, for thee to-day).

During the vacancy of the see, the monastery of Christchurch, in the person of its prior, held the government of the diocese in its hands, and seals for this purpose are extant. An early type shows the archbishop under a canopy, his right hand raised in benediction, his left holding a mitre, while beneath is the figure of a kneeling



official. The inscription reads: S' · OFFICIALITATIS · ECCLESIE · CANTUARENSIS (Seal of the officialty of the Church of Canterbury). Another and later type has a view of the cathedral.

The commissary of the prior used for device a bust of our Lord with a cruciform nimbus, upon a field covered with diaper work. The seals of various other commissaries are of interest, especially those of the commissary-general. In these the figure of Becket, either full length or in bust form, is common. The commissary for visitations took as the subject of his design the session of our Lord, with the legend: SIGILLŪ: COMMISSAR̄: DÑI: ARCHIEPI CANT': IN: VISITACIONE: METROPOLITANA (Seal of the commissioners of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, on metropolitan visitation).

The series used by the vicars-general is of interest mainly to the herald. These seals are, as a rule, applied almost entirely to marriage licences, and are wafers of wax placed between paper and stamped—that of Archbishop Laud will serve as an example. It represents an angel with a drawn sword and a book labelled *Percute* (open), while to the left hand he holds a balance with the word *Perpende* (weigh carefully). The arms of the see are below. The inscription reads: SIGILLUM · VICARII · GENERALIS · DE · GULIELMI · ARCHIEPISCOPI · CANTUARENSIS (Seal of the Vicar-General of Lord William, Archbishop of Canterbury).

Such is a brief summary indicating in general terms the principal characteristics of the seals of the archbishops of the southern province. On the whole they are worthy of the positions and power held by the heads of the Church of England, but the earlier spirit is far more interesting



and artistic than the later. After the Reformation, art suffered severely, and the sense of fitness is often wholly wanting, the composition poor and meaningless, and the proportions unsatisfactory.

The seals of the archbishops of the northern province are almost more interesting than those at Canterbury; but at first the design is very similar, namely that of the prelate standing vested in full pontificals, with his right hand raised in benediction. Early in the thirteenth century the single effigy is supplemented by demi-figures of the saintly patrons of the see, SS. Peter and Paul, which appear first of all upon the counter-seal of Walter de Gray (1215-55). They are, however, transferred in the form of busts, and placed on either side of the principal figure. Geoffrey de Ludham (1258-65) is the first to adopt this device. Walter Giffard (1266-76) places the busts upon his counter-seal, but in their place inserts full-length figures of the saints. Archbishop Wickwan (1279-85) restores the busts, and also adds the emblems of each saint immediately above them. His successor, John Romaime, omits the emblems, but retains the heads. Both appear on the seal of Thomas de Corbridge (1300-3), and on the counter-seal they are also represented full length. Upon the splendid seal of William de Melton (1317-40) they appear within circular panels on either side of the principal figure, and these panels are lettered respectively S' · PA · S' PE. They appear in full length upon his counter-seal with his own kneeling figure below. Full-length statuettes of the saints are found on the seals of William de la Zouch (1342-52), and of John Thoresby (1352-73). The last archbishop to use the old type is Alexander Neville, but he replaces



SS. Peter and Paul by the Holy Mother, and a male and female saint, adding an elaborate shield of arms. This seal is inscribed : S. ALEXANDRI DĪ GRĀ ARCHIEPĪ EBORAC' ANGLIE PRIMAT' Z ĀPLICE SEDIS LEGAT' (The seal of Alexander, by the grace of God Archbishop of York, Primate of England, and Legate from the Apostolic See).

After this date there is no constant type, but each archbishop altered the design of the seal to suit his own inclination. Thomas Fitzalan gives the place of honour to a seated figure of St. Peter, with the right hand raised in benediction, and the left holding a key. Overhead is the Holy Mother, and at the sides attendant saints, one of whom is St. John the Baptist. There are also shields of arms. No figure at all is found on the seal of Robert Waldby, merely a shield with the so-called modern arms of the see. With the dawn of the fifteenth century we find Archbishop Henry (1407-23) substituting the Blessed Mary and the Infant Jesus for the figure of St. Peter, while in the centre of the canopy a majesty appears, and many saints, including the patrons of the see, SS. Andrew, Chad, Wilfrid, and Oswald. This seal is inscribed : S' HENRICI DEI GRĀ EBOR' ARCHIEPĪ ANGL' PRIMATIS. Separate figures of the Divine Father are rare ; but one forms the centre of the seal of John Kemp (1426-52). There is also a majesty in the canopy-work and figures of St. Paul, St. Andrew, and two archbishops. The seal of William Booth (1452-64) is similar, but the saints in the canopy-work are altered, the Holy Mother with SS. Catherine and Margaret taking their place.

The seal of Thomas Savage (1501-7) is entirely different in design. We have now a triple canopy con-



taining figures of SS. Peter, Paul, and Andrew, and beneath them the archbishop kneeling in prayer. Wolsey's seal shows us delicate work of the new style; it is not Gothic in character, but Renaissance. On it SS. Peter and Paul appear in a double tabernacle, surrounded by festoons of flowers and the arms of the archbishop. This seal is copied by his successor, Edward Lee. The post-Reformation seals are very poor and uninteresting; the best is that of Tobias Matthew (1606-28). The centre of his seal is occupied with the representation of the Good Samaritan, with the text: VADE ET FAC TU SIMILITER<sup>1</sup> (Go and do thou likewise). From the time of Richard Sterne (1664-83) a shield of arms only has been used, until the accession of Archbishop Maclagan.

The seals of the ecclesiastical courts of the northern province call for no special remark, since they resemble in character those of Canterbury. During the vacancy of the see the management of affairs rested with the "Court of York." Its seal represents St. Peter attempting to walk on the water; he is shown holding a key and book, with a fish beneath his feet, and over his head the sun and crescent moon. The legend reads: + SI CURIE: EBORACENSIS: VACANTE: SEDE (Seal of the Court of York in the vacancy of the see).

The seals of the several commissaries and officials are also like those of Canterbury, while the Consistory Court used wafers covered with paper. Among the series is a seal of some merit representing St. Peter enthroned with his usual symbols, the keys and a book. The inscription explains its purpose: SIGILLUM: COMISSAR: SCACCAR: ET CUSTOD: CUR: PRÆROG: ARCHIEP: EBOR (Seal of the

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 37.



Commissioners of the Treasury and Keeper of Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of York).

*Seals of Bishops.*—In the introduction to this section we have sufficiently described the nature of the work expected from the various classes of seals used by the bishops. It is now our business to see what types they adopted, and in what chronological order such types are placed. They may be thus divided :—

Type A. The bishop in act of benediction standing.

Type B. The bishop enthroned.

Type C. The bishop engaged in worship.

Type D. Armorial.

Type E. A single saint.

Type F. The Blessed Mary seated with the Infant Jesus.

Type G. A majesty.

Type H. Peculiar.

One of the earliest episcopal seals known to us is that of Ethilwald, Bishop of Dunwich, the original matrix of which is in the British Museum.



SEAL OF ETHILWALD  
(Matrix in British Museum)

It represents a star of eight points, the rays of which are alternately leaf-shaped and fleury, and is lettered + SI EDELVVALDI: EP. If we compare this with the so-called seal of St. Dunstan, figured in the "Transactions" of the Midland Institute, we shall see at once that this latter is obviously a thirteenth-

century forgery, possibly emanating from some religious house. The composition is taken from the seals of West-



minster Abbey, and of the Confessor, with no knowledge of the lack of design found during the Saxon period.

The earliest examples known to us of type A represent the bishop standing upon a rectangular platform or pavement, which is possibly meant for the *predella* or footpace of the altar, whereon he would naturally stand for benediction. We find this on the seal of Hervey, Bishop of Ely (1109-31). The platform is, however, soon altered to a cushion-like pedestal, as in that of William, also Bishop of Ely (1189-97). And this in turn becomes elaborately carved and decorated in accordance with the architectural taste of the period, and is often utilized to support the armorial bearings of its owner. At a later date still it is cut away and replaced by an arched opening, in which the prelate is seen offering mass or engaged in prayer. The earlier seals have no tabernacle work at the sides, nor indeed any canopy. This latter appears with no supports on the seal of Richard, Bishop of Chichester (1245-53), and very shortly after this the side posts become general. As time went on they became more and more elaborate, crowded with figures, and enriched with shields of arms, until, like all the later work, the excess of ornament made the whole design appear mean and spiritless. How did this idea of a canopy arise? Was it only from the practical common sense which forbade a figure to stand in the open without some kind of roofing, or was it from the older position of the bishop enthroned in the centre of the apse of his basilica, and appearing to the people framed by the posts and canopy of the ciborium? The latter custom was nearly dead just as the tabernacle begins to appear on the seal, whereas the practical idea had scarce come into fashion.



There are far fewer examples to be found of type B, but Bishop Peter of Exeter (1280-91) is shown enthroned, and so in the early seal of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln (1123-48); but, of course, at this date there is no canopy, and the throne is cushioned and simple in form. Another similar example is the seal of St. Dunstan already referred to. After the Reformation we find Richard, Bishop of Durham, shown on his late Renaissance seal, seated, writing and wearing a cap and gown.

Type C is frequent, indeed of almost universal occurrence when it comes into vogue. It does not, however, appear very early. The earliest the writer has noticed is that upon the counter-seal of Anthony, Bishop of Durham (1284-1311), and on that of Richard, who succeeded him. It then appears nearly a century later upon the seal of dignity of Thomas, Bishop of Worcester (1407-19), after which date it is common. The type is either the prelate offering the holy sacrifice, or the prelate in the act of adoration, the object adored occupying the central position in the seal. This design is very widely used not only on the seals of bishops, but of every ecclesiastic, including parish priests and chaplains, as we shall see later on.

Type D is also widely followed; indeed the oval seal lends itself to heraldic ornament. The shield consists usually of an impaled coat, the dexter side containing the more honourable charge, that of the see; the sinister—the private arms of the bishop. This shield is usually surmounted by the symbol of episcopal rank, the mitre. In the case of the Bishop of Durham, this mitre rises from a coronet, indicating his temporal rank as a prince palatine. It is still used, although the palatinate jurisdiction was



abolished by the Act 6 Wm. IV. c. 19. The Bishops of Winchester are ex-officio prelates of the garter, and as such place their arms within the collar of that noble order. Since these episcopal seals are often found in a fragmentary state, and the inscription, even when complete, is often illegible, the armorials, both of the see and of the bishop, form a ready way of tracing the history of the fragment. The arms of the English sees will be found blazoned in an appendix.

Type E. In these seals the principal device is no longer the effigy of the bishop, but that of some saint, either connected with the see or with the spiritual life of the prelate himself. Thus at Bath and Wells we find the effigy of St. Andrew upon the seals of William Knight and William Barlow as well as on that of Bonner. The same saint occurs on the seal of Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Winchester. We have already seen how important a place is occupied by St. Peter in the seals of York. The use of saints is, however, by no means confined to a solitary figure in the centre of the seal. We find them in pairs in the throne-work of many seals, as in that of Thomas, Bishop of Ely (1443-84), or, as we have seen, in that of Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey, when SS. Peter and Paul occur. Three principal figures are also just as frequent. One example of interest is that of John, Bishop of Chichester, in which we have the Holy Trinity between SS. Wilfred and Richard. In the seal of Richard, Bishop of Exeter (1496-1501), SS. Peter and Paul are seen and a female saint with a palm branch.

Type F is necessarily found principally upon pre-Reformation seals. The Holy Mother is represented with the Infant Jesus seated on a throne and usually accom-



panied by attendant saints. An unusually fine example is that of Robert Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury (1407-17), in which the central figure is surrounded by an oval nimbus upon an architectural background, with secondary figures of the Holy Trinity and SS. Peter and Paul (see figure). Another fine specimen is that of John, Bishop of Chichester (A.D. 1421), wherein our Lady is seen with a censing angel on the one hand and an adoring ecclesiastic on the other. The type is more varied than we should esteem possible, and the execution usually good ; we shall have more to say of it in another connexion.

The use of the majesty became very popular, and was placed not only on the canopy or other subordinate place, but often occupied the centre of the field. We find it there on the seal of Henry, Bishop of Norwich (1370-1406), and with other lower officials it is more often found. In this strange combination God the Father is represented as an aged man seated and crowned, holding upon his knees the figure of God the Son upon the cross ; God the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, rests either on the cross or close at hand. There are many variations in the device, but this is the common form.

There are yet a few seals of individual bishops which cannot be classed under any general head. St. Anne teaching our Lady forms the device on that of Ralph de Erghum, Bishop of Bath and Wells (1388-1400) ; the Annunciation appears on that of Thomas de Insula, Bishop of Ely ; the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin on that of Henry, Bishop of Worcester (1375-95) ; while an entirely original canting design is used by Thomas Dove, Bishop of Peterborough (1601-30), namely a landscape with the figure of two men fowling and in the foreground



a serpent, in allusion both to the surname Dove and the text St. Matthew x. 16.

There are certain seals used by bishops which are of a peculiar and special nature. Foremost among these rank the series used by the bishops of Durham as counts-palatine of that county; these are similar in type to the equestrian seals used by the lay-barons of the realm. The baron is a man of war holding in the first instance by military service, and as such is represented mounted on his warhorse with brandished sword. In like way these episcopal counts-palatine are represented clad in armour with their coroneted helms surmounted by either a personal crest or a plumed mitre, while their personal arms appear upon the caparison of their horses and upon their shields.

Thomas Hatfield (1345-81) used a seal nearly three inches in diameter with a panache of ostrich feathers for crest. The reverse represents the prelate seated in his pontificals. John Fordham, his successor (1382-88), is more ecclesiastical, and discards the crest for the mitre. Upon the reverse he introduces into the tabernacle work of his canopy the conflict between the archangel Michael and Satan, and the analogous legend of St. George and the Dragon. Walter Skirlaw (1388-1405) used a crest without a mitre, a demi-angel with upraised wings. Thomas Langley (1406-37) has a panache of feathers. Robert Neville (1438-57) the bull's head of his family; During the vacancy of the see, *temp.* Henry VII, that king sealed for palatinate matters with a seal having on the obverse his own equestrian figure, and on the reverse the royal arms. The inscription reads: S' HENRICI DEI GR̃A REG ANGL. R FRANC' & DÑI HIB̃N PRO EPTU DUNOLM'



SEDE VOCANTE (*sic*) (Seal of Henry, by the grace of God King of England, France, and Lord of Ireland, for use of Durham during the vacancy of the see). The series extends to the reign of William IV, and the prelates appear in armour to the last.

A single Bishop of Durham, Antony Bek (1284-1311), was also Patriarch of Jerusalem, and as such had a special seal. The device is made up of a central tabernacle arranged in three stages, the lowermost containing a representation of our Lord's Passion with the attendant figures of SS. Mary and John. The department above has a view of the holy sepulchre with an angel and the three Marys, while the lowest contains the effigy of the prelate kneeling in prayer. In the side tabernacles are the figures of the Divine Mother and St. Cuthbert bearing the crowned head of St. Oswald. The legend reads: S' ANTONII : DEI GR̃A : SC̃E : IHEROSOLOMIT' : ECCLESIE : PATRIARCHIE : ET : EP̃I : DUNEL. (Seal of Anthony, by the grace of God Patriarch of the Holy Church of Jerusalem and Bishop of Durham).

It is impossible in the space permitted us to say more of the episcopal seals, but they yield in interest to none, and those who propose to collect either originals or casts would find occupation and interest even in a single diocese, since there is probably no *complete* collection extant for a single one, and a good deal remains to be done in this direction.

We may fitly conclude the present chapter with two mottoes. One, from the seal of Ralph de Toton, Bishop of Carlisle, reads thus :

VIRGO. IHŪ NŪTĀ (O Virgin, nurse of Jesus).

RADULPHO SIS PIA TUTRIX (To thy Ralph teach piety).



The other, from the counter-seal of Bishop Walter, who held the same see (1223-46)—

+ HEC : SCULPTUA : IMAT (This sculpture teaches).

FINIS : NŌ PUGNA : CORONAT (The end, not the battle, crowns).

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SEAL OF HENRY DE NEWBURGH, EARL OF WARWICK  
(Warwick Castle)

## CHAPTER V

### EQUESTRIAN AND FIGURE-SEALS OF THE BARONS OF THE REALM AND THEIR LADIES

WHILE the sovereign had his barons holding of him vast tracts of land by grand serjeantry, his chancellor, dapifer, seneschal, and butler, so these same barons, when in the habit of imitating in their own honours and within their castles the regal court, succeeded in keeping state with an outward display very little inferior to their royal master. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that when the king borrows from



France his idea of a great seal, so, too, do the barons, although its use did not immediately become general.

No real student of history can afford to neglect these seals. They are not only original and contemporary evidence of their owner's power and influence, but they give his authentic titles, show the fashion of his armour, and after the introduction of heraldic display, his armorial bearings, crest, and supporters. They are also, more or less, a means of determining the taste and character of the individual, while as for local history and genealogy, no seal can afford to be neglected.

The earlier seals of the nobles were at first circular in form and equestrian in type. The business of life was war; the seals represent, therefore, their owner fully accoutred for the charge. This class of seal, roughly speaking, prevailed from the beginning of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries, a duration of about one hundred and fifty years; but isolated examples, antiquarian survivals, are to be met with even to the present day, as has been already noticed in the case of the bishops of Durham.

From the general chapter on royal seals it has been already proved that the loss of a seal was a matter of the most serious nature. An entry upon the *De Banco* roll for the 51 Henry III (A.D. 1267) enables us to see what steps were taken in such a calamity. The Earl of Gloucester and Hereford came before the justices and stated that upon Sunday in the feast of St. Peter in Cathedra while he was crossing a bridge he lost his seal (*sigillum*), upon which was engraved six small shields, and he asked the justices to proclaim this publicly, so that no credit should be given to the device (*signum*). Furthermore,



he sent to the justices an impression of a new seal with but a single shield, and the justices made proclamation in accordance with his request.

Among the oldest of the equestrian seals is that of Osbern, son of Pontius, Lord of Longney, in the county of Gloucester. Osbern appears on horseback turned toward the left, and defended by a suit of mail, over which upon the head is the conical Norman casque. The good knight is not in war panoply, but in hawking array. The hawk rests on his left hand, and is about to be cast in pursuit of its quarry, which also appears. This hawking type is early, and was soon replaced by a more warlike design. The seal of Ernulph de Certrifelt, about the middle of the century, is of the newer and more common type. The warrior is shown in the charge, defended by the usual mail suit and casque, but with his heavy broad-bladed sword raised to strike; and in his left hand a kite-shaped bordered shield. The inscription begins, as usual, with the sign of the cross, taking the place of the similar sign drawn by the witnesses before their own names at the foot of a Saxon landbook, a means of rendering sacred the transaction recorded in the document. The legend in full reads: + SIGILLUM ERNOLPHI DE CERTRIFELT. To this seal Birch gives the date 1143.<sup>1</sup> The horses on these earlier examples are generally plainly harnessed with quite simple breast-bands and saddles, as in the seal of Randle de Gernons, Earl of Chester (c. 1140); but examples can be found in which a flowing foot-cloth, or barding, is seen, as in the remarkably fine seal of Geoffrey Plantagenet, son of Henry II, while the breast-band of the horse and the bordering of the saddle are occasionally

<sup>1</sup> Brit. Mus. Cat. of Seals.



richly ornamented. In the late example of Roger de Quency, Earl of Winchester (*c.* 1250), the bardings of the horse are worked with Quency mascles.

The gradual evolution of armour can be traced in the seals of this class, although the change in fashion was neither so great nor so frequent as in later times. At first the body was covered by a leather suit, upon which rings of metal were sewn. This covered the whole body—legs, feet, arms, and most of the head; it was flexible and tolerably protective. The sewn rings gave place to interlaced rings of metal. The skill used in rendering them tightly woven and impenetrable was very great, and in the best suits a lance would have found some difficulty in making an impression. In the East such arms would be easily heated by the sun's rays; and hence a light linen garment called the surcoat was worn above them. This was girded up about the middle by a cord, as on the seal of Richard, Earl of Cornwall (*c.* 1230). Above the mail covering of the head—the coif—a casque of metal was worn; this left the face unprotected, save for a nosepiece hinged to the front of the casque, which was itself fastened by straps beneath the chin. To render this less likely to heat a cloth of linen called the lambrequin was bound about it and fell in tails behind, as on the seal of Gilbert de Benign'ore (*c.* 1190). As fashion changed the conical casque became rounded, as in the seal of Leisan, son of Morgan (*c.* 1215), and at length gave place to the large helm worn over the bascinet, barrel-like in form, with a transverse slit for sight (*ocularium*) and a perforated vizor. Such a helm is well shown on the seal of Albert de Clare, seventh Earl of Hereford and Gloucester (1262). Helms of this description were occasionally ornamented



by the addition of a fan-shaped crest, as on the seal of William de Echinge ham (c. 1307).

The weapons of offence consist of sword and lance; the former are broad in the blade, with short, straight quillons, and are heavy. Wheel pommel swords of this type were in use throughout the period of early equestrian seals. The lance is less common and generally earlier in date. It is found on the seal of Waleran, Count of Mellent (1144-6), where it has a lance flag of three streamers; it is also seen on the seals of Robert, Count of Mellent, Conan, fifth Earl of Richmond, and Henry the clerk. It is differently borne—viz. couched for the charge—by Peter de Codington. There are many other examples worthy of study in our national collection in Bloomsbury.

The chief means of defence—the shield—underwent modification at a quicker rate than the rest of the armour. The earliest type was long, rather convex, and pointed; strengthened more or less by a projecting boss or spike, from which a rayed ornament (escarbuncle) formed of metal radiates, while the shield is often yet further strengthened by a raised border. In the middle of the twelfth century the kite-shaped shield was fully developed, but it became by slow degrees gradually smaller until it reached the shape generally in vogue at the close of the thirteenth century, which, from its resemblance to a familiar domestic flat-iron, is called the *heater* shape.

The example engraved at the head of this chapter is that of Henry de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick (1204-42). It is taken from a very fine specimen in brown wax attached to a charter now in Warwick Castle, granting the advowson of Compton Verney to St. Mary's, Warwick.

The seal of his successor in the earldom is smaller in



size, but remarkably spirited. The horse is springing to the charge, its ears erect, and bent forward. The earl is himself bending with his horse, and wears a peculiar flat-topped helm of a somewhat rare type. The folds of his surcoat are well executed ; his sword is longer and the breast-band of his horse much enriched.



SEAL OF THOMAS DE NEWBURGH, EARL OF WARWICK  
(British Museum)

The earlier equestrian seals were quite plain on the reverse side, or at the most had merely the mark of the handle of the matrix, but a custom grew up of using a secretum as counter-seal. That of Herbert de Anesti (c. 1190) has what is apparently an heraldic device within a round counter-seal. The more usual plan is that we have already seen favoured by ecclesiastics, namely, the use of an antique gem, with the addition of a legend briefly explaining its purport, such as *Secretum de . . .* or *Sigillum secreti*. It was not, however, very long before both surfaces of the wax were used ; but with the barons we find no such uniformity as that of the seals



of the kings. A seal of Waleran, Count of Mellent, depicts that baron on horseback on both obverse and reverse, armed respectively with sword and lance. This design is also followed by Conan, Duke of Brittany (1165-71), but so soon as armorial bearings are introduced, the equestrian figure upon the reverse gives way to a shield of arms with various heraldic accompaniments. This will be dealt with more fully in another section.

The inscriptions on baronial seals are confined to a border about the edge, and are very simple, yet dignified in character, but have a tendency to become more expansive as time progresses. It has been remarked above that they, almost without exception, commence with the sign of the cross, and the reason has been given. It merely remains to give a few examples of the style and wording. We find SIGILLUM, or its abbreviations SIGILL' or s' in common use, as + SIGILLUM . RADULPHI . ALCHTUNIA . C. 1150; + SIGILL' EUSTACII DE ATH DE . . . S' WILLELMI AMBASAS . C. 1319; + SIGILLUM ROBERTI DOMINI BELLOMONTIS, 1170-1178; and + SIGILLUM HUGONIS COMITIS CESTRIEAE. On rare occasions the father of the owner is mentioned, as + SIGILL' WILLELMI FILII ALANI D' CLAXEBI, or SIGILUM . THOME . FILII . WILL' . FILII HACONIS.

The equestrian seal began to die in the early years of the fourteenth century, but it never lost favour with some illustrious houses, among them being the House of Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. In the year 1298 Guy de Beauchamp became earl. He is noted for the manner in which he brought about the death of the unhappy Peter de Gavestone. Guy used a singularly beautiful equestrian seal, which is figured from a cast in Warwick Museum.



The earl is shown in the armour of the period, and the helmet with the slit *ocularium*, flowing lambrequin, and fragment of crest. He wears a surcoat with his arms, which were also reproduced on the bardings of his horse's footcloth. The armour of his left arm, in which the sword is brandished, is very peculiar, and has an extraordinary corrugated appearance. An even finer seal is that of yet



SEAL OF THOMAS, EARL OF WARWICK  
(British Museum)

another Beauchamp, Thomas de Beauchamp, twelfth earl of Warwick, whereon is seen the equestrian seal under full Gothic influence; as in that just mentioned, heraldry plays a considerable part, since the knight's surcoat, heater shield, and the bardings of his horse are covered with the fess and crosslets of Beauchamp, whilst the barrel-shaped helm is encircled by a coronet, from which springs the swan's neck crest. The armour is half plate, and the sword, attached by a chain to the body, retains the wheel pommel. The reverse of this seal has the ancient shield of Newburgh within a delicate Gothic *rosace*, enriched with



ball flower, and consisting of twenty-four compartments. The inscription is in Gothic lettering, which succeeded the Lombardic type, and reads: *obv.* S' . THOM' . COMITIS' WARRYCHIE ANNO REGNI REGIS E. T'II; *rev.*, POST CÒQUAS W . . . DUODECO EZ REGNI : SUI : FRANCIE QUARTO (The seal of Thomas, Earl of Warwick, in the year of the



SEAL OF THOMAS, EARL OF WARWICK  
(British Museum)

reign of Edward the third, after the conquest of William—the twelfth, and of his kingdom of France the fourth).

The earl died in 1344. Similar in design is the seal of Thomas of Woodstock (1385-9), but his closed helm bears the crest a lion crowned and collared. The seal of the kingmaker, figured in the "Ancestor," vol. IV, p. 143, is also an imitation or continuation of the equestrian design. We see it again upon the seal of Jaspar, Earl of



Pembroke (1459), whereon the horse appears in full caparison, and the knight sheathed in plate armour, with closed vizor and shield of arms. On the reverse the shield is supported by wolves, with coronets about their necks, chained to a mount. In the succeeding century we have for example the shield of Robert, Earl of Leicester (1577). Elizabeth's friend is shown seated on horseback in the rich and disproportionate armour of his day, with plumed helm and drawn sword, while upon the bardings of his horse are the badges of the lion and the bear, with the ribbons of the garter and St. Michael. The reverse is solely armorial. A yet later example is found in the seal of Henry, fifth Earl of Huntingdon. The earl is in full plate, with a helm surmounted by ostrich plumes; there are also armorial decorations of a more than usually elaborate character. In the eighteenth century there is an example in the seal of Montague, Earl of Abingdon (1702), which is chiefly remarkable in that it serves to illustrate the decay in taste in the inscription, which reads: + SIGILLUM · PRE-NOBILIS · MONTAG · COMITIS · DE · ABINGDON · ET BARONIS · NORREYS DE RYCOTT.

The fine seals we have been considering were affixed to charters, manumissions, and other important documents, and would not be used for matters of lesser moment. As became their importance, great care was lavished upon their design. Would that more had been preserved.

#### FIGURE-SEALS

Side by side with equestrian seals as used by the barons may be placed the figure-seals used by their ladies. The former are almost without exception circular, the latter nearly always vesica-shaped or pointed at either end.



The earliest seals of this class represent the fair one in the most warlike sport she indulged in, viz. hawking. Matilda de Albervilla (*c.* 1220) is so represented with the hawk on her right wrist ready to be cast. Constance, Duchess of Brittany (1190-8), has a hawk with long and very peculiar jesses, but placed on the left wrist. There were



SEAL OF JOANE DE BEAUCHAMP, LADY BERGEVENNY  
(British Museum)

not, however, wanting ladies who discarded hawking for the gentler pursuit of flower culture, and such are shown holding a lily. In either case the erect figure gives the artist ample opportunity to display the graceful folds of the long, closely-fitting gown in vogue during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These seals do not show the constant change of fashion to which we are nowadays subjected; and such as there is is chiefly confined to the head-dress—pointed, conical, or flat, as



the case may be. A cloak of fur is sometimes seen, whilst upon the seal of Johan de Stutevill (1265-75) gloves are shown.

Costume reaches its full beauty when, with the fourteenth century, the arms of the wearer were embroidered upon it. In this way we find the dress of Dame Margaret de Nevyle bears her passant lions; that of Agnes de Peccy her dance and billets; while the robe of Margaret, Countess of Winchester, about the same date, is powdered with Quincy mascles.

Of quite another type are the seals representing ladies erect, but holding their own and their husband's arms on either side of them. Thus the fine seal which we possess of Ela Basset, Countess of Warwick (*c.* 1245), is of special interest. The lady is shown standing beneath an architectural pediment, possibly reminding of her benefactions to Heney and Reading, and the nuns of Godstow. She wears a long, plain, flowing dress girt in at the waist,



SEAL OF ELA, COUNTESS OF  
WARWICK  
(British Museum)

tight sleeves, a long mantle reaching to the feet; with her left arm she holds a shield now defaced, while on her right side appears that of Mowbray. The head-dress would seem to be of the butterfly type, in which the hair was covered by a network of wire, over which a light



linen fall was thrown. The inscription reads: + s' ELE · BASSET · COMITISSE WAREWIC.

A smaller seal of like design is that of Alice de Langley, but there is no canopy and only one shield, and that on the right side; the left arm has a hawk upon the wrist. Both these examples are drawn from casts in Warwick Museum.



SEAL OF  
ALICE DE LANGLEY  
(Warwick Museum)

The ladies' hair is occasionally represented worn long and falling naturally down the shoulders, but it is more general to find it concealed beneath the flat cap. The sleeves or maunches are also notable and worthy of a good deal of attention; in some examples they appear extravagantly long, though never devoid of grace, but, on the other hand,

as in the examples figured, tight-fitting sleeves are to be found. A very good specimen is seen in the seal of Idonia de Herst (c. 1190).

In sepulchral effigies a dog is a common attendant, but it is very rarely we find such a representation upon seals.

About 1370 one Thomas Curson used a lady's seal, upon which its original owner is seen holding a bracket hound in her arms. Margaret de Nevyle, whose seal we have already mentioned, has also a dog in her left hand and a hound at her feet. There is the same arrangement on the seal of Ela de Oudeleye (1274), and Juliana de Norton carries her pet dog.

The inevitable exception comes to the fore to prove that all seals of ladies did not represent their owners



standing. There is a thirteenth-century seal of one Mabel de Gattoria, upon which that lady is seen upon horseback riding side-saddle, habited in a long gown and a hawk upon her left wrist. Again, the seal of Beatrice, wife of Robert de Percy (1317), shows that lady kneeling in prayer before a demi-angel issuing from the outer border of the legend.

Counter-seals are far more rare upon the seals of ladies than they are on those of the other sex, and when they do occur are generally armorial. An example (*c.* 1200) is found in the seal of Alwis, daughter of Earl William, and in her own right Countess of Albamara. On this an early gyronny coat appears with an escutcheon above it; this seal is circular. For a pointed example we must turn to that of Ela, Countess of Warwick (*c.* 1245), whereon are the three wavy bars of Basset, and outside the shield the lions of her paternal coat (Salisbury).

These early seals of ladies are far less frequently met with than those of their fathers and husbands; they are not only beautiful in themselves as works of art, but most useful to the student of costume.

The best papers descriptive of the seals of England's early nobility are those which appeared in the "Ancestor" (Nos. 6, 7, and 8, 1903-4), descriptive of the celebrated "Barons' Letter to the Pope," of February, 1301. The seals of seven earls and ninety-seven barons are still appended to the document, and are all illustrated and described.

Among other papers dealing with seals of the nobility are the following: "On Seals of Aylmer de Valance, Earl of Pembroke," "Archæologia," XXI, 203; "John, Earl of



Surrey," *ibid.*, XXI, 195. Papers in "Archæological Journal"—"Seals of the Earls of Cornwall," V, 235-52; "Seal of Gilbert de Clare," X, 269; "Seal of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and other High Admirals of England." "Coll. Arch.," I, 171. "Archæological Journal"—"Seven Seals of the Earls of Oxford," IX, 25.



SEAL OF A LADY  
Fourteenth century. Warwick Castle.



## CHAPTER VI

### SEALS OF THE CLERGY BENEATH EPISCOPAL RANK

THE authorities holding jurisdiction under the bishop are the diocesan chancellor, whose business it is to advise the prelate in matters of law, the vicar-general, vicar in spirituals, and above all the archdeacons, who were primarily supposed to attend to the temporal needs of the diocese ; all, or most of these, had also their several commissaries and officials.

The seals of the chancellors are somewhat scarce, and in the national collection are hardly represented except by those of the London diocese. The earliest is that of Henry de Cornhulle (1217-41). The seal, a pointed oval, has in its upper portion the demi-figure of St. Paul, the diocesan patron, and in base the chancellor standing before a lectern with the appropriate motto : UT · BENE · CANCELLES · BONA · PLANTAR' · MALA · VELLES. A later example, that of Ralph de Ivinghoe (1278-98), has also the effigy of St. Paul, but the inscription is much simpler, a mere statement of fact : S' RAD' : CANCELLARII · SĀI · PAULI · LONDNO. The seal of Robert de Clothall, Chancellor in 1309-19, has the same saintly figure, but below is an arcade with three human heads. In 1369-89, on the seal of Roger Holme, the Blessed Mary takes St. Paul's place, but has saints in small tabernacles on either side,



whilst in the base is the effigy of the chancellor and his shield of arms. It may be gathered from this that there was generally an allusion to the patron saint of the see, in addition to something personal; so that the type of seal used in the chancery depended a good deal on the taste of the individual chancellor.

The seals of vicar-generals are also scarce, the class of document to which they would be affixed not having any very great consequence; but, nevertheless, enough remain to form some kind of guide to their style. An early example is that of Lincoln. In this the Blessed Mary is shown seated with the Infant Christ above a shield of arms, the legend reading: + SIG + VICARII + GEN'AL' + LINCOLNE + ESPĒ. A much later one, for use in the diocese of Peterborough, represents St. Peter seated in a Renaissance shell-backed throne, with arms of the see ensigned by a mitre in the space below. The inscription reads: SIGILLUM VICAR · GENERALIS · DOMINI · EPISCOPI · PETRIBURGENSIS. In later times the paper wafer seal with a simple coat of arms, won its way to general acceptance. The vicar-general was known by other titles; for instance, in 1499 there was a certain John Whitstone, a doctor in decretals, who was vicar in spirituals in the diocese of Lincoln. He used a seal with our Lady in session beneath a Gothic canopy, with the arms of the see below. Norwich gives an example of a union of titles on the seal of Clement Corbitt, LL.D., "official principal and vicar-general in spirituals" (1636). The vicar is shown seated, with his shield of arms below.

From the Constitutions of Otho (Lyndewode's edition, 1689) we learn that the seals of all abbots, priors, deans, archdeacons, and their officials were ordered to be en-



graved with their name and the titles and dignities of their owners by Pope Honorius III in the year 1282, and that cathedral chapters, religious houses, etc., were to procure a common seal for the future avoidance of forgery, so that not only are these we have been speaking of bound by the rule, but archdeacons and all other ecclesiastics holding an official position under the bishop. We may consider the seals of archdeacons under the three headings of (1) religious devices, (2) secular devices, and (3) representations of animate objects. Naturally the opportunity for variety is not wanting, and the choice of design almost unlimited.

In the first place stand representations or symbols of deity, such as that of our Lord in session, which is seen upon the seal of Anthony Waite, Archdeacon of Lewes (1524). The head of our Lord is the central object upon that of Thomas de Skeonyng, Archdeacon of Norwich in 1272. In other examples the *manus Dei* occurs, and is seen on the seal of Nicholas de Sigillo, Archdeacon of Huntingdon (1155-84).

Seals bearing representations of the Blessed Mary are naturally extremely common. She is usually seen as the Holy Mother seated and holding the Divine Son on her left arm, as upon the seals of Robert Jeffray, Archdeacon of Hereford (1482-94), and of Robert de Redeswelle, Archdeacon of Chester (1290-1314). Her full-length effigy occurs (with other saints) upon the seal of Richard de Ravenser, Archdeacon of Lincoln (1368-86), while the demi-effigy is seen upon those of his predecessor, Roger de Fuldon (1276) and on that of Robert de Esthall, Archdeacon of Worcester (1256-72).

When saints are introduced they are placed either



singly, as upon the seal of John, Archdeacon of Wells, or in pairs, as upon that of Thomas de Massyngton, Archdeacon of Exeter (1337). In the former case the selected saint is St. Andrew; in the latter, SS. Peter and Paul. It is almost the universal custom—at least in the later pre-Reformation seals—that the figure of the kneeling archdeacon is placed in an arched space at the foot of the seal—a practice followed, as we have seen, by bishops at times, and very generally among the lesser clergy. Occasionally scenes from a saint's life are chosen, such as the favourite martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which is found on the seals of Richard St. John (1332) and on that of Stephen Langton (1248), both archdeacons in that diocese. The Archdeacon of Cornwall, Henry de Bolegh (1282), chose the conflict between St. George and the dragon; and Thomas Mark, Archdeacon of Norfolk (1459-76), that between St. Michael and Satan. The late thirteenth-century seal of the Suffolk archdeaconry of Sudbury had for device the head of St. Edmund, king and martyr; while John de Chishull, Archdeacon of London (1266), used an angel with a book.

Scenes taken from scriptural narrative also find a place. Such is the figure of Noah's ark with a dove, found on the seal of Nicholas de Sigillo, Archdeacon of Huntingdon (1155-84), and a representation of the fall of our first parents; upon that of Thomas Eden, official of the archdeaconry of Sudbury (1636).<sup>1</sup>

The main division contains the series of early seals, on which a simple figure of the archdeacon is represented, generally standing erect and holding a book, as upon the

<sup>1</sup> Harl., chap. 53, D. 51.



seal of Master Ivo Cornubiensis, Archdeacon of Derby (*c.* 1190), or that of Roger d'Aumery, Precentor and Archdeacon of Lincoln (*c.* 1160). In that of Robert de Hardres, Archdeacon of Huntingdon (A.D. 1191-1207), the owner is shown in the act of benediction; while in the thirteenth-century seal of Aymerie, Archdeacon of Winchester, that official is seen holding a palm branch and book between, on the right an eagle displayed, and on the left two keys. A late seal of this general type is found in that of Thomas Wolsey, Archdeacon of Northampton (1680-1707), who is represented beneath a canopy holding a lamb. Seated figures of the archdeacon are far rarer; one occurs on the seal of Alexander, Canon and Vice-Archdeacon of Lincoln (*c.* 1180), but was evidently meant for a counter-seal only, as it is inscribed SIGILLUM · SECRETUM; and there is a late example in that of George Atwood, Archdeacon of Taunton (1729), in which he is shown seated in a canopied niche of the style of the period, with his arms below. What is meant apparently for a draped bust of an archdeacon is seen on the seal of Simon Langton, already quoted; but such a treatment is very unusual.

A human hand duly vested holding a branch of myrtle is represented on the seal of Robert Tinley, Archdeacon of Ely (1600-16), and an arm holding a balance on the seventeenth-century seal of the archdeaconry of Huntingdon. There seems occasionally, at any rate, to have been a separate seal for the archdeacon personally, his archdeaconry, and occasionally his court also. Of the last-named we have a specimen in the fourteenth-century seal inscribed: S' CONSISTORII ARCHIDIACONI ELYENSIS. The field of the pointed oval is occupied by a full-length figure of St. Etheldreda with book and pastoral staff



within a tabernacle, and below is the official kneeling in prayer.

A view of some part of the cathedral of the see is found on many archidiaconal seals. In this way, as on some monastic seals, we get an idea of edifices no longer existing, but it must not be supposed that the design is a true copy of the original structure. For instance, the seal used in the archdeacon's office in 1744 in the London diocese gives what is perhaps meant for a south view of Wren's great masterpiece, but in no way closely resembles it. Happier results are, however, found elsewhere. The majority of later seals are of the wafer type, and with armorial designs only.

In some respects seals of the officialty of the archdeacon may be separated from those of the archdeacon himself, but they follow pretty much the same type. We find a representation of our Lord upon the roof of a church, His right hand raised in benediction, and a cross held in His left, on the seal of the officialty of the Bishop of Norwich (1403). The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Child form the subject of that of the officialty of the Archdeacon of Northampton (1473); while images of saints with the figure of the official kneeling in prayer below are common.



SEAL OF WILLIAM LE KNIGHT,  
CLERK  
(Warwick Castle)

In 1881 a curious discovery was made in the cottage of a dressmaker at Derby Abbey, near Derby. A



large pin-cushion being opened to be restuffed was found to contain an oval copper seal with a boxwood handle, placed there doubtless to serve as a weight. It proved to be the seal of Nathaniel Ellison, who was Archdeacon of Stafford from 1682 to 1721. It measured  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $1\frac{7}{8}$  in., and bears in the field a large anchor between the words SPES ANIMÆ. The marginal legend is: SIGILLUM NATH: ELLISON ARCHIDIACONI STAFFORDIÆ, 1682. This seal is illustrated in "Derb. Arch. Soc. Journal," vol. IV.

The rural deans form locally the mouthpiece and eye of the bishop, and in modern times do a very great deal of gratuitous work conscientiously. There were many passing matters that needed sealing, and in many instances both the personal seal of the dean and that of his deanery are known. Whence we may suppose, for some purposes at any rate, the deanery was a *person* in the eye of the law. A few examples only must suffice. Canterbury deanery had an architectural device, a doorway with a bell-turret over it, and the legend + s' DECANATUS · CANTUARIE. That of Ospringe, county Kent, represents the Holy Mother and Child, with the legend : SIGILLEI : DECANI : DECANATUS : DE OSPRENG. The seal of Ripple deanery has a like design, but in this case the dean kneels in prayer below the chief figures. The type selected by the Sussex deanery of Shoreham is that of the Annunciation, while that of Sutton Valence, in the county of Kent, represents our Lady crowned and seated upon a canopied throne. Figures of the rural dean occur, in imitation of those officials of higher rank, sometimes, as in the case of Sudbury and Buckingham, with a mere head only, or at other times the whole figure; but in the latter case usually shown kneeling in prayer. The deanery



of Preston, in Lancashire, had a curious device—a salmon between two fleur-de-lis.

The Dean of Yarborough, county Lincoln, about 1310, used a seal representing an altar and its ornaments—at that time very few, namely, a chalice and two candlesticks, while above the *manus Dei* is seen. An early seal of thirteenth-century style shows us that the ancient type, a simple standing figure, was not confined to the higher ranks of the clergy. Thomas de Crumbwell, Dean of



SEAL OF ALEXANDER  
DE ASTELYNE, CLERK  
(Warwick Museum)

Newark, stands in the act of benediction, just as though he were a bishop. In 1334 the deanery of Beverley used a figure seal, but on this the dean is shown kneeling. A castle in allusion to the name of the town is seen on the seal of Ascer, Dean of Daventry (1277), with the legend + ASCER EST NOME EIUS (Ascer is his name). St. Peter's keys appear on that of Walter, Dean of Saxelby, county Lincoln. A seeded fleur-de-lis is the device of its neighbour Wragge, and the same was also used in the Yorkshire deanery of Otley. The better-known Pontefract had an eagle soaring; but this is later in date, viz. 1510. The ancient port of Dunwich, the seal of whose Saxon bishop is figured upon p. 130, had for its deanery a fitting device—a lymphad with one mast and the figures of the brother apostles SS. Andrew and Peter; and yet another, a gem of Greek origin representing a warrior with a shield at his feet.

The seals of the country clergy, the secular priests, and chaplains are extremely variable in character. Their design, the material in which the matrix was made, was



largely a matter of individual choice, and almost everything is found, from the home-made wooden-seal to the matrix cut in silver. Some are rough-and-ready symbols of very simple character; others are works of art. There is, however, no need to follow up the question, since the human love of imitation led them to take as a rule their ideas from those above them in ecclesiastical rank.

The following papers may be useful: "Matrices of Ecclesiastical and other Seals" (Sir J. Evans), "Proc. Soc. Antiq.," XVI, 80-3; "On the Seals of Archdeacons," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, XV, 26-35.





## CHAPTER VII

### SEALS OF KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES

**T**HERE are no seals more interesting to the herald and genealogist than those dealt with in the present chapter. They came into use long before the science of arms was codified, and are found in thousands in the muniment-rooms of our county families. Numerous as they are, they give clues to the succession of owners and the surnames of the owners' wives when all other contemporary evidence is wanting. Thus they enable us to check *visitation* pedigrees and the fabrications of Elizabethan heralds.



The seals that precede heraldry properly so called are not numerous, but they have an artistic fitness and a vigour found nowhere save in archaic work. According to Woodward,<sup>1</sup> even abroad the science of heraldry did not begin very early, and no shield of arms is known more ancient than that of Philip I., Count of Flanders (c. 1164). Those described by Eisenbach and others of earlier date are, in the main, spurious or doubtful. Among these early seals Woodward quotes that of Richard de Falconer, of Hawkerston (c. 1170), who used for his device a fleur-de-lis and two falcons. The seals of the Corbets, of the same early days, have corbies or ravens perched on branches of trees; the Conisburghs, conies among foliage, all in canting allusion to the name. In the reign of Richard I. Thomas de Areci used a rose; William de Ordew, a lion; David de Armentiis, three swords (c. 1150); whilst his successor, Henry de Armentiis, used but one. The seal of Gunnora, widow of William Banastri (c. 1228), bears a mermaid and a flower; Richard de Lucy, the well-known lucie or pike; and Fulke Pagannell, the two lions passant of his family between two fleur-de-lis. On these seals there is no trace of the essential figures of heraldry, such as the fess, the bend, the chevron, the saltire, and the other ordinaries; for some years to come they are not found, but, nevertheless, the old device was often accepted as part of the new coat of arms, and thus took a permanent position. The same evolution can be seen in continental heraldry.<sup>2</sup> The names of Falconer, Corbet, and Conisburgh are cases in point, but the transition between assumed devices and

<sup>1</sup> "Brit. and For. Her.," I, 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 49.



genuine heraldic ones was not in some cases fixed before the middle of the thirteenth century, and even then what Woodward calls "mutations of arms" took place.

In all heraldic seals the shape of the shield upon which the device is blazoned is most important: it is at once

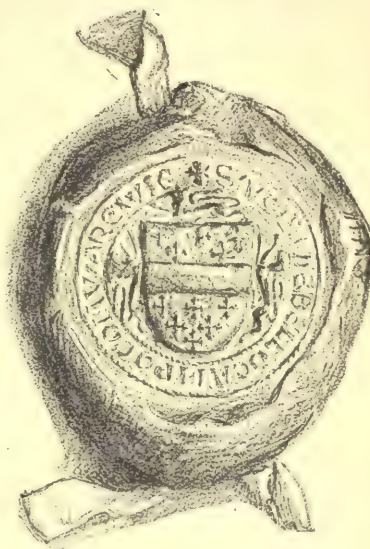


a ready way of dating approximately the seal itself. In the time of Duke William the shield was long, kite-shaped, and curved along its sides, sometimes strengthened by a border of metal and sometimes with a floriated central boss, forming a starlike ornament, afterwards called an escarbuncle. This boss is found as late as the close of the twelfth century. After this date the shield became round-



topped or heart-shaped, and, although smaller, was yet long enough to protect most of the body, and was still curved in form. About the year 1200 it began to lose its convex appearance, and its top was no longer rounded. A little later it became more elongated and had flatter sides. The example figured above is preserved at Warwick Castle, and gives an excellent idea of an early heraldic seal. It is attached to a grant of court rights to the Abbey of Alcester,<sup>1</sup> and cannot be much later in date than 1200.

After this the heater type of seal came into vogue, and was used for a long period, but in actual warfare went out of fashion. It was, however, retained upon seals all through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Before it was adopted a much more clumsy shape was sparingly in request, such as we find upon the seal here figured. It is left



SEAL OF WILLIAM DE BEAUCHAMP,  
EARL OF WARWICK

to these later times to degrade the badge of honour to such purposes as sealing wine bottles. The spirit of early heraldry was quite dead, or so honourable a thing would scarce have been so used.

It may now be as well to quote a few notable examples showing this evolution. In the earliest form heraldic

<sup>1</sup> Greville Charter, 21.



decoration is found applied to the seal of Alice de St. Licio (c. 1160), in which the whole field is covered with chevrons, but no shield is seen; so also in the case of Rohesia, Countess of Lincoln, *temp.* Henry III: in both cases there is something very near a coat of arms, but not placed upon a shield. The seal of Richard de Waren (c. 1190) shows a heart-shaped shield charged with two lions passant. Again, a little later, Roger de Laschi, Constable of Chester (1179-1211), sealed with a seal having a shield with curved sides, its upper angles rounded, and bearing a quartered coat with a bend across it and a label of seven points. The counter-seal has an interesting canting device strapwork interlaced in the form of a star. The type next used is a trifle longer and a little more pointed; it is found on the seal of Guy de Poscenera (c. 1190). This good man bore a cross pattée upon a field barry. This gave place to an early type, in which the base of the seal was rounded and the top straight. Such a shield is seen in the seal of William de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who died in 1298. This type of shield did not last long, but soon gave place to the so-called heater-shaped shield, which was widely used, as has been said above, and for a considerable time.

These heater seals are specially noticeable for the exquisite tracery in which the shield is set. A favourite form is that of the interlaced triangles, the smaller triangles being enriched with dainty cusplings and sometimes with knottings of flowers.

These seals are in the case of men nearly always round; in the case of ladies generally pointed; but there are a few exceptions, amongst them those of Ralph and Robert



## SEALS OF KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES 167

de Maundeville, both of thirteenth-century date and triangular in form, as is the seal of Hugh de Neville.

The seal of William de Bottereux is a fair specimen of the true heater shape. It bears the vairy coat of the family, and is figured from an example at Warwick Castle.



SEAL OF WILLIAM DE BOTTEREUX  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF ROBERT DE BEAUCHAMP  
(Warwick Castle)

In the middle of the fourteenth century the shield is placed *penché*, or *couché*, instead of *droit*; that is, it is made to support with its upper angle the crested helm with its mantling or lambrequin. See, for example, the beautiful seal of Robert de Beauchamp of Powick. The shield replaces the crosslets of the main line of Beauchamp with



martlets. The helm has a coronet, from which issues the demi-swallow of the family. The mantling is elaborate and foliage-like. A notice of these Beauchamp shields of considerable interest will be found in Boutell's "Heraldry."



SEAL OF RALPH NEVILLE  
(Warwick Castle)

Towards the end of the fifteenth century a notch was cut in the right or dexter side of the shield, near the top, and was used as a rest for the wearer's lance. This type is called *ecu à bouche*. An example of a seal of this date, but without the notch, is that of Ralph Neville, lord of Oversley, in which shield, crest, and supporters appear.



## SEALS OF KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES 169

With the Renaissance period a great decline in heraldic art began. The shield is drawn heavily and of an obtuse shape, due to the love of *quarterings*, which were now at their height, and greatly tended to foster the desire for ostentation on the part of the user, and at the same time brought handsome fees to the herald. A good specimen of a seal of the heavy type is found in that of Fulke Greville, lord of Beauchamp's Court, the friend and companion of Philip Sidney. The heavy mass of wax contrasts rather strangely with the shallow design. It will be noticed from the figure that this seal is uninscribed. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the vair-shaped seal is the rule, and perhaps in no other form is so intrinsically ugly.



SEAL OF FULKE GREVILLE  
(Warwick Castle)

In early times, when heraldry had as yet none of the laws with which professional heralds trammelled it, the rule "one man one coat" held good, and no one dreamed of placing more than a single shield upon his seal. If, however, he married, and the lady of his choice chanced to be heiress of a family more powerful than his own, he sometimes discarded the coat armour of his race and



adopted that of his wife, but never attempted to bear double arms. Nevertheless, towards the close of the thirteenth century more than one shield appears. This is a sign that the idea of marshalling, which afterwards, under the Elizabethan heralds, became ridiculous, had begun. We have already had occasion to allude to one of its forms while dealing with figure seals, that, namely, wherein the lady stands between the arms of her husband



SEAL OF ELLA BASSET  
(Warwick Museum)

and father; but contemporary with these are a number of seals no less carefully executed, and containing a central important shield, with secondary shields grouped about it, the interspaces occupied with delicate tracery having the cusplings so dear to the Gothic designer.

The seal of Elizabeth, heiress of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, gives the place of honour in the centre to her third husband, Roger D'Amori, but adds about it the lions of England. This central device is within a cross



formed of four other shields, namely, of John de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, her first husband ; of Theobald de Verdon, her second husband ; and on either side those of her own family. The arms of Castile and Leon are added in tri-foiled compartments. Her daughter used a seal with eight shields in a circle round the central shield of Bardolph, whom she had married.

Another method—adopted to show maternal descent—took from the feminine coat some distinctive charge and added it or combined it with that of the father. In this way the Mohuns added to their maunch the fleur-de-lis of Agulon.<sup>1</sup>

Shields in single pairs are seen on the seal of Alice, wife of William le Latymer (1311); on this in a pointed oval are the arms of Latymer and Bolingbroke. They are also arranged in groups of four, five, or six about a centre, and even, as we have seen, with eight or more separate shields. All these are cut on a background of cusped and foliated tracery, which in early examples is further enriched with ball-flower. Trefoils, quatrefoils, and double triangles are the commonest geometrical figures, and these are used with rare judgment and good taste as a background upon which to hang the more important details.

It is not till the fourteenth century that the practice known as dimidation occurs ; in this way the half of two distinct arms are united. Somewhat similar in idea is impalement, which ere long became universal ; but in this the arms of the husband and wife, or the bishop and his see, are joined without any loss, save that of crowding together the charges.

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, "Brit. and For. Her.," II, 458.



To the same century must be assigned the practice of adding heraldic ornaments to the plain shield, such as the helm with its crest. In the earlier examples the helm is extremely artistic and elegant, high and conical, but with a transverse slit for the eyes called *ocularium*, and circular air-holes lower down. The earliest crested helm known is, as we have said on page 65, that of Richard I, and it is twenty-six years before another example is met with, even abroad, when that of Matthew de Montmorency (A.D. 1224) occurs.<sup>1</sup> In England no one used a crest, it would seem (with the exception of Richard I), until Edward III, who, about 1340, placed an uncrowned lion upon his helm.

The crest in England never reached the dimensions it held abroad ; it was not of sufficient importance to be included in rolls of arms. It is strange that nowadays its use has practically superseded that of the ancient coat of arms ; on notepaper, plate, and carriages the family crest (often illegal) occupies the prominent position. Among the oldest forms taken by the crest abroad were the buffalo horns and eagle pinions. The former were used in England by the Warwickshire family of Verney, and that with a most peculiar blazon. The horns are parted per fess, their upper portion vairy ermine and ermines ; the lower part gules, semée of golden roundels (bezants). These ancient crests were made of *cuir-bouilli*, and were affixed by a cap of the same material. The junction of the two was not infrequently marked by a silken scarf (the *lapeline* or *lambrequin*), the loose ends of which hung down ; and upon them the device of the crest was in some examples carried on.

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, "Brit. and For. Her.," II, 559.





SEAL OF RICHARD DE STRALEIGH

1345  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF HUMPHREY DE STAFFORD  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF SIR WILLIAM CANN

1361  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF JOHN BLAKE  
(Warwick Museum)

EXAMPLES OF HERALDIC SEALS



Supporters also appear during the fourteenth century. In the early examples they are placed in the blank spaces left in the seal between the central device and the legend border, and arose, Woodward thinks,<sup>1</sup> from the happy invention of the seal-engraver, who filled up the spaces at the top and sides of a triangular shield upon a circular seal with foliage or with fanciful animals. Such figures begin to come into fashion early in the fourteenth century, and among them we find birds and beasts of prey and other animals—suggestive of power or swiftness—angels, monsters, and even trees and inanimate objects. Single supporters are found at times, though rarely, and were adopted from the old seal custom, representing ladies of rank holding a shield in their hand.<sup>2</sup> Seals so borne are found on the breasts of eagles, whilst in the oldest Douglas seal the armorial coat is supported by a single lion. Side by side with the single supporters arose that which became the general practice, namely placing a supporter on each side of the shield.

In the fifteenth century seals show us that quartered coat of arms became the rule ; hitherto they had been quite exceptional. There are many of these existing, some of them worthy successors to earlier examples, such are the elaborate seal of John de la Pole, ninth Earl of Lincoln, and that of John, Earl of Oxford and Admiral of England. In the century which succeeded the early Renaissance, much good work was done, but after this flatness and heaviness are found, and the seal-engraver's art is well-nigh lost. The rise and dominance of the Renaissance led to abandonment of the lights and shadows, together with the graceful forms of Gothic art. The

<sup>1</sup> "Brit. and For. Her.," II, 628.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 630.



matrix was but lightly engraved, and on its flattened surface was placed a broad, shapeless shield, rendered necessary by the large number of quarterings fashion demanded. A display of individuality was lost in a slavish mechanical drawing, in which crest and supporters, scroll and wreath, lost all vitality and became poor and



SEAL OF RICHARD DE BEAUCHAMP, 1401-1439

(British Museum)

commonplace and often wholly unsuitable. Impossible crests are placed on helmets which could never have borne them ; they are only equalled by the absurd figures upon the shield.

This did not come about all at once, there are steps in the downward path. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the use of Spanish wax was secured, but in its inception it was modest enough, and the seal impressed at the end of pendant slips of parchment, as the old seals



had been ; but it very soon became changed and affixed *en placard* to the deed itself. In the case of larger seals wax was covered with paper, or a wafer substituted, and then impressed with the seal. Letters were sealed with wafers as early as 1624. It remained to the eighteenth century to do away with any trace of the seal belonging to its owner. It had once been more important than the signature ; it now became so degenerate in practice that all the parties to a transaction used the same seal, an office seal, kept by the solicitor to do duty for everything—a matrix, which was sometimes that which a great family had used in the past ! At the present day everything tends to economize, and we forget that our law-papers and documents may be wanted for reference by future generations. Where will they be ? Cheap paper, worthless ink, brittle sealing-wax of nineteenth-century documents will not bear the test of time. There will be but few to survive, and as for seals, beyond a certain number of letters sealed with that which is more an ornament than a seal, there will be nothing. The great Victorian era will for record workers be a blank save in the case of royal and greater official seals.





SEAL OF STEPHEN DE BEGGELEY  
(Warwick Castle)

## CHAPTER VIII

### SEALS OF PRIVATE GENTLEMEN AND OF MERCHANTS

THE smaller gentlefolk of medieval times, the merchants, leading traders, and yeomen, had often need to attest with their seals documents of importance, such as small grants of land, leases, testamentary dispositions, and so forth. In short, it may be safely said that any freeman capable of holding property of any kind, and even some serfs, needed a seal. Many of these were of a rough-and-ready description, cut in a piece of wood or bone; lead was also used, and was easily moulded, but at the same time easily forged. Ivory, bronze, and silver



were luxurious materials, and capable of far more delicate workmanship, but were necessarily confined to the rich. It is rare that we find anything analogous to the seal of dignity, counter-seal, and secretum among the lesser gentry, but such an example has been described, but is undoubtedly rare, and a single matrix sufficed for all ordinary persons; but these are not devoid of interest, although, as a rule, they lack the extreme elegance of design and excellence of workmanship of those of the nobility, clergy, and great corporations. The use and evolution of certain ornaments, such as the star, the fleur-de-lis, and multifoil, can be clearly seen, and the manner in which the bolder and more striking designs of the thirteenth century gradually became the shallow overlaid examples we find in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The earliest seals of the class we are now considering date prior to the use of arms, and are usually oval or circular, bearing conventional devices or pre-heraldic animals. Such a seal is that we figure of Stephen of Beggeley, which bears a legend almost indecipherable, but the griffon upon it is full of action; so, too, is the bird upon the seal of Richard Streche, which dates from the early twelfth century. Other examples of somewhat similar character have already been noted under the head of "Seals of Knights and Esquires." This type was supplanted by the widespread introduction of conventional ornaments, such as the fleur-de-lis; an early example of the variety called by Birch a seeded fleur-de-lis is that of John de la Harlotera (*temp.* Henry III). The elegance of the design speaks for itself. The fleur-de-lis passed through endless variations, gradually becoming, as time went on, more attenuated in all its parts. In its progress



we get such an example as that of Alexander de Hurst (*temp.* Edward I).

Another ornament much used was the star, either as a star pure and simple, or a sun with wavy rays. The example we figure—that of Solania, daughter of John de la More—is specially pleasing. It is of late thirteenth-century date. It is not, however, floral designs only that were



SEAL OF RICHARD STRECHE  
(Warwick Castle)

adopted ; human figures, such as that of a vintner tapping a tun of wine, which was the device used by Reginald, of Friday Street, citizen of London (Warwick Castle Charters, No. 233) ; or animal life, such as the rabbit, the device of John of Pollertoft ; or, again, such birds as the falcon of Richard Streche, or the pair of birds on either side of a palm tree in the dainty little oval seal of Richard of the Castle, of early thirteenth-century date. In fact, there is simply no limit to the devices used by the seal-engravers of this early date, and even the monstrous



grotesques in which the medieval mind so greatly delighted are by no means rare. Were these strange forms prompted by the grylli on antique gems?



SEAL OF JOHN DE LA HARLOTERA  
(Warwick Castle)

Those lesser gentry who had the right to bear arms naturally used those arms upon their seals, and the shield itself is surrounded by a rosace of delicate cusping, with an astonishing number of variations, the interlaced triangle, symbol of the Divine Majesty, appearing with great frequency. Nor is this design alone among the sacred devices with which documents are found attested; thus when, towards the dawn of the fifteenth century, we find many

parties to a deed, it is no unusual thing to notice that whereas one or more may be using seals of some merit, the majority will seal with single letters, or at most the simplest designs rudely cut in wood or bone. These generally take the initial letter of the Holy Trinity, or of our Blessed Lord, or of the Holy Virgin, or some popular saint. Their sanctity is usually indicated by a roughly-executed crown placed over the letter; such letters are T for Trinitas, R for Rex, I for Jesus, M for Maria, N for Nicholas, and so forth.

Many of the seals of about this date are also conspicuous for their mottoes. As specimens of distichs with a reli-





SEAL OF ALEXANDER DE HURST  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF SOLANIA  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF JOHN OF POLLERTOFT  
(Warwick Castle)



SEAL OF RICHARD OF THE CASTLE  
(Warwick Castle)



gious tendency we find in the thirteenth century the prayer—

“Mother of Jesus, make me one  
With Christ my Saviour and Thy Son”;

or, again—

“O Holy Virgin, draw me nigh thee ;  
Rise, Nicholas, and stand thou by me.”

In the succeeding century we have—

“Hear me when I bid thee Hail !  
And shelter me from every ill”;

and, lastly—

“At Edmund’s, Thomas’s, Mary’s prayer,  
O Holy Child, look on me here.”

Of another sort is that upon the matrix of the seal of Thomas of Bredon, Abbot of St. Peter’s, Gloucester (1224–8)—

“Show forth, O brother T. de B.,  
The good things I reveal to thee.”

Somewhat similar are such pithy sentences as “I am a seal, good and leal,” which frequently occurs, or “Trust the bearer,” “Keep faith,” “Hide what is hidden, read what is read.” A seal with a squirrel bears the motto : “I crack nuts” ; another with a lion the words : “I am the king of beasts,” which allusion, if meant for the owner of the symbol, is somewhat egotistical. The hunting calls, “Sohow—I go !” or “Sohow ! sohow !” are suggestive of a more jovial personality, while the ungallant and sarcastic motto, “By the rood women are wood” (that is, mad), can have belonged to none but a soured bachelor. On the other hand, affection speaks on many a seal. Such are the mottoes : “Je suis d’amour,” “Love me and give,” “Take my heart ; do not deceive me.”

“Mine is a heart that loveth thee,  
So, lady-love, do thou love me” ;



or, again—

“A loving friend I am to thee,  
Be thou a loving friend to me.”

Other mottoes occur in minuscules, such as the three following examples in French: “Pour ce qu’il me plect,” “Bon-me vie,” “O ma vie.”

There is a large class of seals of very great economic importance, since they were at once the trade-mark and badge of the merchant using the seal and a guarantee of the quality of his goods. Merchants were not at first allowed the use of proper coats of arms; indeed, the earliest instance known to the writer is that on the brass of William Grevell, the great woolstapler, who died in 1401. This is in the fine church of Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire, and has both the arms of his family and his merchant’s mark. It is difficult to say what these strange marks were meant to indicate, but they usually consist of a streamer or flag, such as would fly from the masthead of the merchant vessels; a religious symbol—usually the cross—to give a sacredness to his dealings, a guarantee of good faith; and some letter or letters not apparently invariably from the name of the user. The earliest marks do not appear to be borne on shields; but the later ones are semi-heraldic, and such marks are not unknown as charges upon genuine coats of arms. It will be remembered that in 1363 it was enacted by statute that every master goldsmith should have a mark of his own, and such a mark was but an emblem or symbol. The seals of Coventry merchants figured here include two with flags, in both of which the cross is present; in one case with a shield introducing upon its fess charges from the arms of the company or craft gild to which the owner



belonged ; and in the other, that of brass, has two chevrons reversed and interlaced with letter T in base, and inscribed : SIGILLII THOME DE HATTONE. The shield, it



COUNTER-SEAL OF THE  
TRINITY GILD OF  
COVENTRY



SEAL OF THOMAS DE  
HATTON, COVENTRY



SEAL OF WILLIAM DE  
STARE, COVENTRY

will be noted, is within a cusped octofoil. The family of Hatton, *alias* de Stratford, was one of much mark, and two of its members were in succession Lord Chancellors of England. The two other seals have the cross-staff,



SEAL OF WILLIAM ALSLEY  
1365



SEAL OF ROBERT  
WHATTON, 1361



SEAL OF THOMAS DE  
NARRINGTON, MERCHANT  
OF COVENTRY, 1375

but no flag, and both are almost, strictly speaking, heraldic ; the simpler is the seal of William Alsley, a merchant of Coventry ; the larger—that with two amulets in chief—that of William, merchant, of Coventry, *temp.* Edward II.

The seal of Richard de Kinton has also the cross-staff



and flag, but the other supplementary details are placed on a shield in a manner approaching an heraldic device. The seal of Robert Whatton (1361) is a similar type, but an unusually good example. Finally, the little seal of Thomas de Narrington embraces the flag and cross-staff, the initials and device of the owner borne as before upon a shield.

There are a few seals used as signets or counter-seals, which bear some superficial resemblance to merchants' marks, and two of these are figured. It will be seen that they lack both the flag and cross-staff.

These small seals of simple gentry, merchants, and yeomen have not yet had justice done them. They are very numerous and very well designed, and to those who wish to form a collection, not only tolerably easy to procure, but well worth the trouble spent on them.



SEAL OF NATHANIEL DUDLEY  
Master of the Corpus Christi Gild  
of Coventry



SEAL OF ADAM SEGESTA  
Master of the Corpus Christi Gild  
of Coventry, 1392





OBVERSE OF SECOND SEAL OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY  
(Warwick Castle)

## CHAPTER IX

### SEALS OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES

THE seals of the numberless religious houses—large or small—which dotted our land in medieval times form a singularly attractive series. They were used at an early date, and are remarkable for their artistic merit. No religious house could be without one, since each was compelled by the statute of the first Edward, entitled *De apportis religiosorum*, which became law in 1307, to possess such a common seal for the greater



dignity and credit of the house. And this seal, which had before that time been in sole possession of the abbot, was to be held henceforth in common by himself and four of his monks, and without it no document could



REVERSE OF SECOND SEAL OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY  
(Warwick Castle)

be considered legal or binding. As Woodward points out,<sup>1</sup> this was not because the worthy clerks could not write, but because while a mere signature could easily be forged, a seal could not; but in spite of precautions, he quotes instances to show that fraud

<sup>1</sup> "Eccles. Her.," p. 4.



was at times possible. Thus he tells us in 1318 some "clerics, excommunicated by the Archdeacon of Bissy, treacherously attacked and mortally wounded the seal-bearer of that ecclesiastic and robbed him of the '*scel aux causas*' of his master," and therewith forged their own letters of absolution. At other times the genuine seal was removed from one document, to which it was properly attached, and improperly affixed to another of more importance. Such a case happened in the diocese of Narbonne, in 1282. And actual forgeries at times took place ; even as early as the eleventh century a goldsmith of Limoges counterfeited the seal of Pope Urban II for the bishop of that see. The excellent Urban detected the forgery, and the bishop and his archdeacon were the one deposed, the other declared to be infamous even in name.

In religious houses, in practice, the three who were responsible for the safe keeping of the seal were the abbot, the prior, and the precentor or cantor. Of these the cantor was the actual guardian. He brought the matrix to the chapter when it was needed, together with the wax that was required, and made the required impression, and held one of the three keys which locked the coffer containing it.

If the convent seal became faulty through age or ill-usage, another matrix was obtained. Such a transaction is noted in the charters of Salisbury Rolls Series, No. xcvi.

In an ordinance respecting the use of the chapter seals of Sarum, dated 7 January, 1214, it was decided from that date to give up the use of the old bone seal (*verteri osseo sigillo*) on account of the numerous flaws in it.

Religious corporations used, generally speaking, three descriptions of seals : (i) Seals of dignity, wherewith



charters and documents of greater importance were sealed ; (ii) Counter-seals, in the case of corporations usually the privy seal of the head of the house for the time being ; and (iii) Seals *ad causas*. But in certain large monasteries, such as Westminster, the great officers had seals of their own, such as the chamberlain and the sacrist.



COMMON SEAL OF THE ABBEY OF LANGLEY  
(British Museum)

It will be as well in considering monastic seals to group them arbitrarily under their devices, and the following headings serve to contain most of them : A, Deity ; B, The Blessed Mary ; C, Saints ; D, Legends ; E, Figures of the founder, etc. ; F, Architectural ; G, Miscellaneous.

First in dignity, though late in date, must be placed those seals upon which a majesty appears. This device is to be found on the seal of the mitred abbey of Binham, on its second foundation. It is much more common in a subordinate condition, especially in a shrine. We so find it in



the beautiful seal of the Austin priory of Westacre, in the county of Norfolk, in which it is placed with a vesica-shaped aureole in a pediment of the canopy, and is surrounded by the evangelistic symbols. A second example, figured below, is the seal of the master of the hospital of Bridgenorth.



SEAL OF HENRY FRANCIS  
MASTER OF THE HOSPITAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY, BRIDGENORTH  
(Warwick Museum)

Scenes from the actual life of our Blessed Lord are not much more frequent, if we except those that represent him as an infant with His Mother; but they are nevertheless occasionally met with. Thus the transfiguration is found upon the third seal of the abbey of Bermondsey



(*c.* 1356); but when this was disused the subject illustrated by the new seal is the divine session. This is also found on the seal of the Austin nunnery of Grace Dieu, Leicestershire, and in the Carthusian House of Beauvale, Notts, both of which date from the thirteenth century. The friars' minors of Exeter chose for their device the presentation of Christ in the temple; but this is of late fifteenth-century date. Our Lord upon the cross surrounded by the emblems of the evangelists is the device used by the collegiate church of Crediton; and just such a crucifix is in the centre of the very peculiar seal of the Austin nunnery of Flixton, county Suffolk. The shape of this seal is possibly unique; it is a combination of a lozenge and a quatrefoil.

The Blessed Virgin Mary very naturally is one of the commonest figures on monastic seals, and scenes from her life are also found. The guild of Knowle, as well as the church of that place, which was of collegiate rank, portrayed Saint Anne teaching the blessed Mary.<sup>1</sup> The annunciation forms the subject upon the twelfth-century seal of Binham, a Benedictine priory in Norfolk. The salutation was used by the Carthusian house of Les Priours de la Wode, in the Isle of Axholme. The assumption occurs on the early sixteenth-century seal of the Austin priory of Bushmead; while the coronation of the Virgin is the device upon the thirteenth-century seal of the priory of Selborne, as well as upon the houses of Bisham (1345), the abbey of Bordesley, county Worcester (1520), and Bridlington, in the county of York. The simple seated figure with the Holy Child is, however, the most usual device. Among others, it occurs on the seals

<sup>1</sup> Reg. of the Guild of Knowle.



of Abingdon, county Berks, of eleventh-century date; Canons Ashby, county Northants, in the twelfth century; the Premonstratensian house of Oxney (1310); and even as late as the sixteenth century upon the seal of the Hospital of St. Mary and St. Giles, at Boughton, in Chester.



SEAL OF MILVERTON CHAPEL

As an example we figure the beautiful seal of the chapel of Milverton, the matrix of which is in the Birmingham Art Gallery. The canopy is curious, as is the head of the founder in the basement.

The next class of seals—those in which the figure of the patronal or other saint occupies the most prominent position—is a very large one, but the treatment is fairly uniform. The figure is usually placed upon some kind of pedestal or bracket, under a tabernacle of shrine work. The saints' especial emblem is, as a rule, carried. The older the seal, the less ornate are the surroundings.

Among these standing figures we find St. Giles upon the twelfth-century seal of Little Malvern Priory, in Worcester; St. Guthlac upon that of the Benedictine priory of Hereford, of early thirteenth-century date; and St. Asaph upon the seal of the Sussex priory of Chichester. But standing figures are not the only ones chosen. There are almost as many seated, as upon the twelfth-century seal of Colchester Abbey, or the figure



of St. Radegund, which appears on that of the abbey of Bradsole.

More important than these is the figure of St. Augustine, which is found upon the second seal of St. Augustine's abbey, in Canterbury, which dates from 1188. The famous abbey of Bury had upon its first seal St. Edmund enthroned; but later on the king's martyrdom is depicted, with the traditional wolf keeping guard over the king's head; above is the Almighty holding a crown, and angels receiving the martyr's soul.



SEAL OF THE PRIORY AND CONVENT  
OF LLANELLS  
(Warwick Museum)

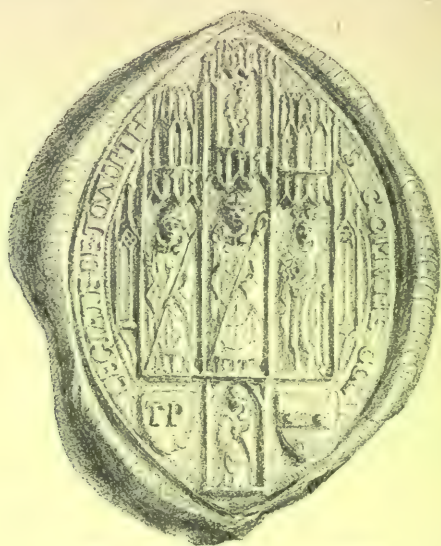
The oldest seal of Westminster Abbey represents the figure of St. Peter seated upon a throne, his right hand raised in benediction; this is dated 1121-40. The second seal, which is somewhat different in detail, is figured at the head of the present chapter.

Demi-figures occur upon the seals of the abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury, at an early date, viz. eleventh century, and also upon that of Combwell St. Mary Magdalene a century later; but they cannot be called common.

The tabernacle work of the canopy in later examples



is often crowded with saints, and has an evolution of its own. The eleventh and early twelfth-century seals are generally devoid of any approach to a canopy, but in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries a small architectural covering is seen, but without side-posts, at any rate in the earlier examples; from this time onward there



SEAL WITH FIGURES OF SAINTS  
(The College of Tanworth)

is a constant increase in the detail applied to this canopy, until at length most of the space at the artist's disposal is occupied by it, and it contains shields of arms and many other additional details. With the Renaissance the canopy is less ornate, and the background known as "shell-back" is introduced, while *swags* of flowers and classical figures are found.

In Class D the legends told by the monkish chroniclers



of their founders' lives are made to serve the purpose of seal decoration. Among the foremost of this description may be placed the seals of the powerful abbey of Evesham. These represent the legend of Eoves the swineherd, according to the version accepted by the monks. The seal is rather large and circular. On the obverse Eoves is seen standing between two oak trees, and tending a sow with her young. On the scroll are the words, in Saxon: + EOVES · HER · WONEDE · ANT · WAS · SWON · FOR · PI · MEN · CLEPET · PIS · EOVIŠHOM. Outside this scroll is a tree, and in the upper part a building with figures of St. Ecgbwine, Bishop of Worcester, the founder, kneeling before our Lady, who is attended by a man and woman, to whom her words, ECCE. LOC<sup>9</sup> QVĒ ELEGĪ (The place for the church I have chosen), are addressed; while on the right is the vision Eoves saw of our Lady. The whole has a legend reading: + SIGILLUM · SANCTE · MARIE · ET SANTI · ECGWINI · EP̄I · EOVIŠHAMENSIS · MONASTERII (The seal of the monastery of St. Mary and St. Ecgbwin, the Bishop of Evesham). On the reverse is a curiously intermingled design divided in two by an arcade. In the uppermost compartment is seen St. Ecgbwine kneeling and offering a model of the church to the Holy Mother, who is seated; in the lowermost stage the three royal patrons of the monastery, Kenred, Offa, and Ethelred, presenting a charter inscribed: —DANUS—REGIE—LIBER—TALI. The charter has a seal with the lions of England. On the right is Bishop Ecgbwine receiving the deed, with a chaplain by his side: + DICTIS · ECGWINI · DANT · REGES · MUNERA · TRINI · OMNIBUS · VNDE · PIE · NITET · AVLA · SACRATA · MARIE.

The fifteenth-century seal of Hayles Abbey, county



Gloucester, is also legendary. It is in form a pointed oval representing a monk standing upon a stairway holding in his right hand a glass bottle, the receptacle of the sacred blood of our Lord, the most priceless relic the abbey contained. A cross issues from the bottle, and the left hand holds an aspergillum. The field of the seal is elegantly diapered with foliage with cinquefoiled flowers. The inscription reads : \* SIGILLŪ · FRATERNITAT<sup>9</sup> · + MONASTERII · BEATE · MARIE · DE · HAYLES (The seal of the brotherhood of the monastery of the Blessed Mary of Hayles).

The first seal of the Benedictine priory of St. Martin, Dover, of thirteenth-century date, is also of similar character. The obverse shows the saint on horseback dividing his cloak with a sword, and a beggar receiving the severed portion ; on the reverse the saint in bed with a demi-figure of our Lord issuing from clouds, and holding a cloak in His right hand and a book in the left. The legend on the reverse has this inscription : + MARTINI : VESTE : SUM : TECTUS : PAUPERE : TESTE (O cloak of Martin, bear witness that I am a shelter for the poor).

The late fourteenth-century seal of the Cluniac priory of Lewes is another interesting example ; on the obverse there is seen in the upper portion a monarch enthroned, holding his beard in His right hand and a sword in the left. On either side also in niches are courtiers, and beyond these again attendants. In the base beneath a four-centred arch the martyrdom of St. Pancras, who was the patron saint of the establishment, and on either side the arms of Warrenne and Fitz Alan quarterly. The legend reads : MARTIRIALE DECUS TRIBUIT MICHI CESARIS IRA (The anger of Cæsar brought me the glory of martyrdom).



The reverse represents the convent chapel, with saints, viz. our Lady, St. Pancras, and SS. Peter and Paul, and the words : MARTIR . PANCRATI PER TE : SIMVS : RELVATI (Oh, Martyr Pancras, by thee let us be consoled). And about the margin : DULCIS : AGONISTA : TIBI QUERTIT : DOMUS : ISTA : PANCRATI : MEMOR' : PRECIBUS : MEMOR' ESTO : TUOI'.

The effigies of the founder do not commonly occur, but examples are to be found. Thus the hospital of Castle Rising, in Norfolk, used a pointed oval, with the founder, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, kneeling under a canopy, with a tabard of arms. This hospital was not, however, founded till 1604-14, and a much earlier example occurs in the priory of Cokehill, county Worcester, the seal of which has a standing effigy of the foundress, Isabella de Beauchamp, Countess of Warwick ; this was used after the year 1260.

The architectural type of seal is also very frequent. The usual idea is to represent the western elevation of the conventual church. We get an early example in the case of the first seal of Battle Abbey (1175-79), but the view is taken from the north. A little later is the seal of the priory of Ankerwick, county Bucks, upon which that church is represented with a central tower having a gable cross at either end and central door. The church is apparently half-timbered and thatched. A yet earlier seal is the eleventh-century seal of the mitred abbey of Chertsey ; this has a view from the north. The church has a western annexe, gable crosses on either end of the nave and on the chancel, and a peculiar tower with two upper stages of wood, with a central porch.

The chapter seal of Llandaff—also twelfth century—



enters into greater detail. There the nave is shown with a clerestory of four circular openings above a doorway flanked by windows, with a central tower, and another, possibly a bell-tower, at the junction of nave and chancel. The first seal of the abbey of Athelney, eleventh century, shows the church of that foundation viewed from the



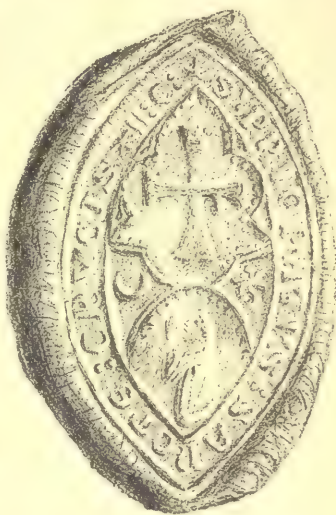
SECOND SEAL OF BATTLE ABBEY  
(British Museum)

south. It has a tower at the west end as well as in the centre. The seal of Boxgrove gives an elevation of the priory church, with a central tower of three pinnacles. So too the chapter seal of Llandaff (1230-40), which has a view from the west with Norman details, a central tower, and smaller towers to the transepts. Other examples will be found in the second seal of Bury St. Edmunds (*c.* A.D.



1517), which is rich in details of tracery ; that one of the priories of Ipswich, with a view of the conventual church from the south ; this is of twelfth-century date. The third seal of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, gives both an elevation and section of the church at once curious and interesting. Very similar is the seal of the abbey of St. Werburgh, afterwards the cathedral church of Chester. Like the former, scenes from the life of the particular saint are introduced ; while lastly, in the case of the priory of Cottingham, flags with armorial device are represented flying from the roof of the church.

There yet remains to be considered a small group of miscellaneous subjects, such as the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the sixteenth-century device on the seal of Croydon Hospital of the Holy Trinity. This seal also bears above the principal device the story of Esther and Ahasuerus, and below a shield of arms. The seal of the Cistercian House of Vallis Dei has a tree of three branches, on each a bird with a sprig of foliage in its beak, and on the trunk two other birds. The priory of Brecknock, county Brecon, used the eagle of St. John standing upon a demi-wheel, but this is of late date, viz. 1514. The seal of the Austin Abbey of Waltham shows the holy cross of that place erected on a mound, supported on either



SEAL OF THE PRIORY OF THE  
HOLY CROSS  
(British Museum)



side by an angel. The reverse gives the arms of the abbey and the impress of three gems in the Byzantine style, one of which is labelled TOVI and HAROLD, the names of the joint founders.

Distinct from the individual houses are the seals used by the several military orders and those of some of the regular chapters. Foremost in interest and power stand the Knights Templars, whose device—an *agnus Dei*—occurs not only upon the seal of the Temple itself, but upon those of its masters. The Knights Hospitallers made a wide departure, using, in imitation of the emperors of the East, leaden *bullæ*, bearing for device a representation of the master and his knights kneeling before a patriarchal cross with the inscription: + BULLA MAGISTRA ET CONVENTUS HOSPITALIS IHERUSALEM. The last two words were placed upon the reverse of the seal about a view of the Holy Sepulchre, showing our Lord's Body upon a bier, or more properly, perhaps, a catafalque designed in Byzantine style and showing a pendant lamp. The masters of the order also used *bullæ* of their own for all important matters, but seals were also affixed by the *penitenciarius* to indulgences. Their house in Clerkenwell used for device the effigy of the prior kneeling before a patriarchal cross; but at a later date the head of John the Baptist was adopted, while yet later the seals are chiefly armorial. A favourite inscription reads: SALVE CRUX SCĀ ARBOR DIGNA (Hail, holy cross, O worthy tree). Akin to these seals is that of the priory of St. John, in the town of Warwick, which was a house of Austin canons of the rule of the sepulchre. This contains a sepulchre standing on four feet, an obvious reliquary, surmounted by the cross patriarchal of the order, with the monogram



I H C below, and on either side gables with crosses and the legend : + SIGILL. FRATRVS. SEPVL<sup>2</sup>UM. WARWIKEI · D · ANGLE  
(The seal of the brotherhood of the sepulchre of Warwick, England).



SEAL OF THE PRIORY OF THE SEPULCHRE, WARWICK  
(Warwick Museum)

The regular orders sometimes used seals. Thus the chapter-general of the Cistercians used in England and Wales a seal with a church upon it having a central tower and the arms of the community, with the legend : SIGILLŪ : CŌE . CĀPLI : GENĀLIS : ORDEŠ : CISTERCIEN̄ IN ANGL' ET WAL' (The common seal of the chapter-general of the Cistercian order in England and Wales).

The prior provincial of the Black Friars used a pointed oval, upon which are two figures supposed to represent our Lord meeting St. Mary Magdalene. The minister



of the Friars Minor had a seal upon which the martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket is shown, with image of the minister kneeling in prayer below, with the legend : SIGILLUM : MINISTRI FRATRUM : MINORUM : PROVINCE : ANGLIE (The seal of the minister of the Friars Minor of the English province). On the seal of the Maturines is a representation of the divine session of our Blessed Lord and the arms of the order, with the words : SĪGILLŪ : PROVINCIALATUS : ORDINIS · SĀE · TRINITATIS (The seal of the



SEAL OF THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL  
OF FRIARS PREACHERS  
(British Museum)

Provincial of the order of the Holy Trinity). The White Friars took for their device the coronation of the Virgin. This also has a figure of a prior kneeling in prayer, as has the seal with the figure of St. Catherine used by the prior-general of the Austin Friars.

As an example, we figure the seal of the Friars Preachers used by the prior provincial in England. This is peculiar and rather romanesque than Renaissance in character, but has the shell-back of the latter. Beneath the shallow canopy is an effigy of our Lady and the Infant Christ, and the legend reads : SIGILLŪ PRIOR : PROVINCIALUS : ANGLIE : ORDINIS : FRATRŪ · PREDICATORŪ (The seal of the prior provincial in England of the order of Friars Preachers).

The seals of orders of knighthood do not greatly concern us, but we cannot omit to mention that of the Order



of the Garter, the general type of which is that of the pendant to the collar of the order, viz. the combat between St. George and the dragon. The inscription reads: + SIGILLUM . MAGNUM . NOBILISSIMI . ORDINIS . GARTERIS (The seal of the Most Noble Order of the Garter).

The following books and papers will be useful: Dugdale's "Monasticon Anglicanum," eight vols., folio (1817-30); the *magnum opus* on English religious houses. In this will be found many carefully drawn figures of seals.

Pedrick, Gale, "Monastic Seals of the Thirteenth Century," De la More Press, 1902.

There are useful papers on the seals of the Templars in "Arch. Journ.," vol. XXXVII, 193, and in XXXVIII, 122, as also in "Archæologia," IX, 128. The seals of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem are described in "Arch. Journ.," XVII, 45.

The following papers are of interest: "Monastic Seals of Suffolk," "Arch. Journ.," II, 268; "Seals of Lesser Houses," *Ibid.*, VI, 190.



## CHAPTER X

### SEALS OF CATHEDRALS AND THEIR CHAPTERS

**A**MONG the most important religious corporations are those of cathedral churches. Their seals were used for just such purposes as those of religious houses, and were much the same in character, and we can very well consider them under similar heads. Thus Class A contains seals representing deity; B, seals with the Blessed Virgin Mary as principal device; C, seals with saints; D, architectural; and E, various.

The most usual device in Class A is the session of our Lord in glory. This appears upon the counter-seals of Canterbury as early as 1175, with the text: EGO SUM VIA, VERITAS, ET VITA (I am the way, the truth, and the life). It is also the subject of the seal *ad causas* of the dean and chapter of Lichfield; and upon a seal of Rochester, the reverse of which bears the martyrdom of St. Andrew, with the motto: EGO : CRUCIS : CHRISTI : SERVUS : SUM (I am a servant of the cross of Christ). Our Lord in glory, in the act of benediction, attended by a male and female, kneeling on either side, is the device of Durham, the new foundation of 1541. Upon its reverse is a beautiful "assumption." The Blessed Mary is shown standing upon the crescent moon supported by angels, while the Almighty Father is about to place the crown upon



her head, and, over all, the Holy Spirit, in his dove form, broods. A demi-figure of our Lord appears upon the earliest seal of Norwich, blessing the fabric. Class A is not a large one.

The Blessed Virgin Mary (Class B) is the subject of a number of seals, but she usually appears seated with the Holy Child in her left arm and a sceptre in the right. She is thus shown upon the finely executed seal of the chapter of Hereford, upon which St. Ethelbert also appears. The legend is very simple: SIGILL' : BEATE : MARIE : ET BEATI : ETHEBERTI : ECCLESIE : HEREFORD-ENSIS. An early seal of Lincoln has the same device, but the sceptre terminates in a lily. On another seal of the same chapter, a seal *ad causas*, our Lady holds the model of a church. As an angel is addressing her, this might be considered an "annunciation," but it is not. The annunciation, nevertheless, forms the principal part in the composition of the reverse of the second chapter seal of Warwick, and was later (1544) cut out to be replaced by a shield of arms.

The cathedral of Worcester had a seal in use in the eleventh century showing Mother and Child, with the difference that the Blessed Virgin holds in her right hand a fleur-de-lis. The legend reads: + SIGILLUM SCÈ DEI GENETRICIS MARIE WIGORNIENSIS ECLÉ (Seal of the church of Worcester, of Mary the Holy Mother of God). Upon the reverse is a small oval impression from a gem, on which is figured a female pouring libations to a god, and the motto: + HABUNDANS CAVTĒLA Ñ NOCET (Having prudence, this hurts not). A demi-figure of the Holy Mother is placed between censing angels on an early twelfth-century seal of Carlisle Cathedral, which is a



bishop and his chaplain praying. The obverse of the seal of Chester Cathedral shows the Blessed Mary praying at a lectern, with our Lord at her right hand, and the scroll: SALVE SCA PAR. REG. This is dated 1541.

The earliest capitular seal of Lichfield (*c.* 1357) treats the Blessed Mary in a specially pleasing manner. She is seated in profile, and holds the Holy Child upon her right knee. Her position above a two-spired building representing the west front of the cathedral, surrounded by moon and stars. In an arched compartment below the other patron saint, St. Chad, appears in cathedra in the act of benediction. The inscription reads:—S. C. DEC. ET CAPLI . ECCLIE SCE. . . . IE ET SCI CED. DE Lychfeldia (The common seal of the dean and chapter of the church of St. Mary and St. Chad of Lichfield). The seal is admirably figured in Dr. Cox's "Lichfield Capitular Muniments." Of the second seal of the chapter, made in the days of Bishop Hacket (1661–80), Dr. Cox says: "It would be difficult to say which of the two figures is the least reverential or the most ridiculous, the seated, crowned, and sceptred Virgin or the kneeling and marvellously vested St. Chad, so fiercely wielding a formidable crook."

Class C is again a large one, since the patron saints of the several sees naturally play an important part in the composition of the seals, as, indeed, we have already seen. Thus SS. Peter and Paul, with a model of the abbey between them, are placed upon the chapter seal of Bath (A.D. 1530). The crucifixion of St. Andrew is upon the seal *ad causas* of the chapter of Wells. The seal of the cathedral of Ely shows the sainted Etheldreda between her husbands Tonberht and Ecgfrid, with censing angels. On



the reverse she is again seen, but this time with St. Peter, and below, five persons in a boat. The chapter seal of Exeter represents St. Peter with his keys, while that of London (the first of the series) represents St. Paul upon the cathedral roof, and below three clergy in act of worship. In like manner Winchester's patron, St. Swithun, occurs upon its seal. Many saints occur on the reverse of architectural seals, but of these more hereafter.

There is, however, an early seal of the chapter of Durham affixed to Egerton Charter, 523, with a simple cross for obverse and the words: + SIGILLVM VDBERHTI PRESULIS DEI; while on the reverse is an impression from a gem.

Of all the cathedral seals none are more interesting than those of Class D, since by them the student hopes to understand at least the general outlines of the fabric's architectural history. Unfortunately experience shows we must not put our trust too fully in the engraver, who may sometimes never even have seen the edifice. The Canterbury series is very instructive; it begins with one of eleventh-century date, which has a building showing a central and side towers with a porch and tiled roofs. The seal which succeeded it shows a central tower with a penthouse roof, terminating in an angel, with four other towers and a lofty apse. Upon a third seal a view of the west front is shown, with heads of our Lord, SS. Dunstan and Ælfheah, all of whom have their names added. In the sky overhead are censuring angels. The third seal of the new foundation represents the cathedral as seen from the south.

There is a very early pre-Norman seal of the chapter of Bath lettered in Saxon characters SCĪ PETRI BAȝONIS



ECCLESIE. In this the square form of the c is used, and the thorn letter for TH. A late seal of Chichester is peculiar, since the cathedral is thereon called TĒPLV IVSTICIE. Llandaff's twelfth and thirteenth century seals are both of them architectural, and so is that of Norwich. The seal of the latter, used about 1258, is an exceptionally



FIRST CHAPTER SEAL OF BATH ABBEY

fine example. The chapter seals of Exeter and Hereford are also architectural, the earlier seal of the latter dating from 1150, and lastly, London. The thirteenth-century seal of the chapter of St. Paul shows a view of the cathedral from the west with a central tower and a row of fleur-de-lis for ridge-tiles. On the reverse is the conversion of the patron saint.

In the armorial class but one single seal is found—and that the eighteenth-century matrix of the dean and chapter of Peterborough. The arms are those of the deanery—two swords in saltire between four crosses pattée.



The chapter of Wells used a curious device in canting allusion to the name. In the centre is a figure of the bishop, his right hand raised in benediction, while he tramples sin under foot. On either side are representations of wells of water.

This is perhaps as fit a place as any to consider briefly the seals of the cathedral clergy—the dean and his canons, the college of vicars-choral, the precentor, etc. ; all these follow types common to the rest of the clergy, and their devices can be classified upon the same or very similar lines. Thus we have representations of deity on the seal of William de Grenfield, Dean of Chichester (1296–9), the design portraying our Lord's session in glory. The heads of SS. Peter and Paul appear on either side, while the figure of the dean worshipping is placed below. The seal of John de Bokyngham, Dean of Lichfield (1349), has a figure of our Lord accompanied by angels. The Blessed Virgin Mary is found on many seals, among them upon that of John Constable, Dean of Lincoln (1812); and her demi-effigy is upon the seal of an unidentified dean of Salisbury.

Saints are frequent. St. Andrew's martyrdom occurs on the oval seal of John Godelegh, Dean of Wells (1305–27), and upon that of Walter de Medford, his successor, in 1413; in this case with a shield of arms. St. John the Baptist is yet more popular. In the seal of John, Dean of Exeter, the saint is seen holding an *agnus Dei* on a plaque. This is also the case in that of John de Aqua Blanca, Dean of Hereford (A.D. 1293), while a form common enough upon private seals—that of St. John's head upon a charger—is found on the seal of John of Derby, Dean of Lichfield (1280–1319). The dual saints, Peter



and Paul, appear on the seal of Patrick, Dean of Exeter, with a representation of that ecclesiastic in prayer below, and also in that of Roger of the Leye (A.D. 1283-5), Dean of St. Paul's. St. Paul is found on the seal of John of Chishull, his immediate predecessor (A.D. 1268-73), and the head of the saint on that of Master Richard Talebot, Dean of St. Paul's (*c.* 1260). Both these have the effigy of their owner worshipping below.

The earlier type of seal was, however, in the case of bishops, abbots, and other dignitaries, a simple standing figure. We find it upon the seals of Walter and Geoffrey, Deans of Chichester (A.D. 1230 and A.D. 1253), and that of William of Tournay, Dean of Lincoln (1223-39), and his successor, Roger of Wereham. That of Ralph of Langford, Dean of St. Paul's (A.D. 1142), shows that cleric half-length, with cap and cloak, holding a reliquary. William of Lessington, Dean of Lincoln (A.D. 1267-72), appears seated, reading at a lectern, while in the late seal of Jonathan Brown, Dean of Hereford (1636-43), that dignitary's head appears between his initials.

Simpler devices are, however, to be seen, such as the seeded fleur-de-lis of Peter of Cicestria (A.D. 1223-37), Dean of Wells, or the shield of arms of John de Stretle, Dean of Lincoln; and efforts at versification are not wanting. We find such a fragment of a rhyming hexameter on the seal of John de Shepeye, Dean of the last-named cathedral in 1392. It reads:

SHEPEYE : DECANUM : . . . IA : QS : SANUM.

In some chapters the office of sub-dean existed, and the clerics filling the office had their own seals. Their devices are, as a rule, simpler and less ornately treated than those of the deans. Thus Lambert, Sub-Dean of Wells



(A.D. 1223) used the *agnus Dei*, but Robert of Berkeley, a canon of the same chapter (A.D. 1230), had an elaborate seal with the Holy Mother and Child, in the upper part St. John and a saint, with a chalice below, and in base the sub-dean himself praying. The office of sub-dean, interchangeable in this case with the deanery seal *ad causas* of Hereford, used A.D. 1418 the head of a saint between four roses. And lastly, John, Sub-Dean of Lincoln (A.D. 1216), used an antique gem representing a combat between two warriors.

Canons, acting individually, apart from the joint action of the chapter, scarcely appear, so that their private seals are rare. When they do so, the devices are either religious, such as the beautiful seal of Hugh of Hopewas, Canon of Lichfield (1352-81), which contains in a carved rosette the canon's shield of arms, and above it a demi-figure of the Holy Mother and Child, or the seal of Richard of Campeden, Canon of Exeter, which is also of fine design; in the centre, under canopies, are two crowned saints, above them the heads of ecclesiastics, below the canon kneeling in prayer beneath a trefoiled arch. Others are purely armorial, as in the case of the seals of Peter of Goldesburgh and Simon of Istleys, Canons of Lincoln (A.D. 1345).

The precentor, apart from his vicars-choral, has occasionally a seal, such as that of William of Puntingdon, Precentor of Exeter (c. A.D. 1302), the subject of which is the annunciation, with the emblems of SS. Peter and Paul and the cleric in prayer. Or an earlier example, that of a thirteenth-century precentor of Wells, upon which is the figure of St. John the Baptist with the *agnus Dei*. And lastly, the curious seal of William of Tewknor, Pre-



centor of Chichester (A.D. 1216), an oval with a dexter hand issuing from the side and holding a crosier.

A college of vicars-choral holding estates existed in some cathedrals. We find them at Exeter, with a late fifteenth-century seal representing our Lord walking on the sea, and St. Peter sinking, with the text: QUARE DUBITAST<sup>i</sup>: below are the heads of the vicars-choral, and one (? the precentor) in front half-length praying. The succentor and vicars-choral of Lichfield used for seal a pointed oval under a trefoiled arch, a bishop half-length, with a pastoral staff, and in base a group of seven vicars. There are several hundred impressions of this seal among the muniments of Lord Willoughby de Broke preserved at Compton Verney appended to receipts for rent. The seal is inscribed: S. COMUNE VICARIOR. ECCLESIE LICH (The common seal of the vicars of the church of Lichfield). It is figured in Dr. Cox's catalogue of the "Lichfield Capitular Monuments," page 160, as its late seventeenth-century successor. The older seal appears to have been lost when the cathedral records passed into the hands of the Puritans.

This second seal is a striking instance of the degradation of the art of seal-cutting. It is a miserably poor copy of its predecessor, and the seven tonsured heads of the vicars have been corrupted into seven pellets or roundels.

#### PECULIAR JURISDICTIONS

All over the country these jurisdictions arose. They may be classed as—(i) royal, under the immediate supervision of the crown; (ii) archiepiscopal, under the archbishops; (iii) deanal and capitular, under the control



of the dean and chapter of the cathedral body of the diocese in which they occur ; (iv) archidiaconal ; (v) prebendal, and (vi) rectorial ; (vii) monasterial, now in lay hands ; (viii) manorial ; and most, or all of those, which in Sims's day amounted to 372, had seals of their own. It is obvious that in a work of this size much space cannot be devoted to them, yet an example or so must be described in order that the student may have an opportunity of comparing their general design.

As a rule, seals of this class are of the vesica-shape so greatly favoured by ecclesiastics. The archiepiscopal peculiar of Saltwood, county Kent, has for device a lymphad with two fishes in the sea, upon which the vessel rides, and the legend : + s' JURIDICIONIS ECCL'IE D' SALTWODE (The seal of the jurisdiction of the church of Saltwode). Another—that of Wingham, county Kent—represents the coronation of the Blessed Virgin, with the legend : \* s' OFFICIALITATIS DE WENGHAM (The seal of the officialty of Wingham). The seal of the peculiar of Calke, diocese of Lichfield, shows the official in a gown in the act of prayer, and has the inscription : + SIGILLUM . OFFICII . PECULIARIS . JURISDICTIONIS . DE . CALKE (The seal of the official of the peculiar jurisdiction of Calke). The prebendal peculiar of Leighton Buzzard, county Beds, had in a pointed oval a majesty within a canopy and tabernacle work, and at the base the official kneeling in prayer. It is inscribed : SIGILLUM . OFFICII . PECULIARIS . JURISDICTIONIS . DE . LEIGHTON (The seal of the official of the peculiar jurisdiction of Leighton). The rectorial peculiar of Stratford-upon-Avon shows in a pointed oval John de Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury (1333-48) standing, and in base



a shield of arms, with the legend: *s' PECULIARI JURIS-DICCOIS DE STRETFORD SUP ABANA* (Seal of the peculiar jurisdiction of Stretford-upon-Avon). There is also a seal of this peculiar issued in accordance with the Act 1 Edw. VI. c. 3, whereby all such peculiars were seized into the sovereign's hands, and the royal arms and title ordered to appear upon their respective seals. It was not, however, for long, as the Act was set aside by 1 Mary, Statute II, c. 2. The Stratford seal bears the royal arms, and is inscribed: *SIGILLUM REGIÆ MAGISTRATIS AD CAUSAS ECCLESIASTICAS PRO PECULIARI JURIS DE STRATFORDE-UPON-AVON* (Seal of the King's Majesty for causes ecclesiastical for the peculiar jurisdiction of Stratford-upon-Avon).<sup>1</sup> The matrix of a very late seal of the same jurisdiction is preserved in the Birthplace Museum of that town. It has certainly no artistic merit.



SEAL OF THE PECULIAR OF  
FISHER'S ITCHINGTON  
(Warwick Museum)

We figure an interesting seal of this class representing a crowned saint in girded tunic and royal robe, holding in his left hand a sword and in his right a ring, with a shield of arms in base representing a bird holding a fish. The legend reads: *SIGILLUM PECULIARIS JURISDICTIONIS DE FFYSSHER'S ITCHYNGTON* (The seal of the peculiar jurisdiction of Fisher's Itchington). The seal itself is of sixteenth-century date.

The seal of the peculiar of the chapel of Peak Forest, founded in the seventeenth century and dedi-

<sup>1</sup> See "Archæologia," vol. XXXIV, p. 438.



cated to Charles, king and martyr, has two legends, which have been carelessly cut. The one is a faulty Latin rendering of "The peculiar jurisdiction of the chapel in the Peak Forest," and the other, "The seal of the jurisdiction of Charles the Martyr, 1665." Certain initial letters have so far eluded explanation. The whole question is discussed in Dr. Cox's "Churches of Derbyshire," II, pp. 271, 279. This seal used to be in very frequent use, as Peak Forest was for a century and a half the "Gretna Green" of the Midlands for runaway marriages.

The large Derbyshire parish of Hartington was also a peculiar, and the vicar was termed dean. The ivory seal of Thomas Harvey, vicar (1635-48), is extant. It is of pointed oval shape; the device is a curious amalgam. At the top is the sun; a little lower on the dexter side is a crescent moon; on the sinister side is a hand holding balances, issuing from a cloud with seven stars; under the balances is a label bearing *VINCIT FUI PATITUR*; below this a shield bearing in chief six crescents, and in base an arm in armour holding a dagger. The legend is: *SIGIL . THOM . HARVEY . DECANI . DE . HARTINGTON . CUM . MEMBRIS.*

The following papers will be useful to the student: "The Seals of Peculiars," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, V, 238-50. [Fifty-three seals of peculiars are described. A very thorough paper.] "Matrices and Seals of Peculiars in Dorsetshire," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, XIII, 165-8.



## CHAPTER XI

### SEALS OF SECULAR CORPORATIONS

FOR the sake of a place, we speak here of the county as a corporation, although Maitland tells us it is not a corporation, only a *communitas*;<sup>1</sup> but he cites an instance, Devonshire, in which the county as a county had a seal, and we know in the sixteenth century the Stannaries had a seal bearing the arms of Cornwall. Cheshire, however, had a seal as a county palatine, and a very interesting seal it is. Probably many sovereigns used it, and even the earls of the county before their high office was vested in royalty; but when royalty begins to use the palatinate seal, it takes the equestrian type upon the obverse. The effigy of the sovereign appears clad in full armour in royal caparisons, and on the reverse the impaled shield of the kingdom and the county. In the case of Durham the bishops were also princes palatine, and as such used secular shields of great merit, which have been already dealt with.

In ordinary cases the seal of the sheriff answered all practical purposes, and since the county was not, strictly speaking, a corporation, it did not actually need a seal. With the sheriff it was different; there were a thousand and one documents to which his seal was attached, but as

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. of Engl. Law," I, 534.



a rule they were of a perishable nature, which probably accounts for the rarity of seals of this class ; but in almost every case the seal used was the private one of the sheriff, and not an official one. Nevertheless, seals which seem to be official were sometimes used. The most usual type appears to be a triple-towered castle, with the owner's initials, or some other subordinate charge. We find them on the seal of Sir Maurice Bruyn, Sheriff of Essex (1436), with wings on either side, and the letter M above ; on that of Nicholas Townley, Sheriff of Lancaster (1632), where the tower is surmounted by the Townley crest and flanked by the letters N. T., with LANC in base. The seal of Thomas de Morieux, Sheriff of Norfolk, has the castle between four small quatrefoils and the letters T. M. ; this dates from 1355. That of Sir John Bruyn, Sheriff of Southampton (1554-5), has the castle with the family arms above its portal, and is thus at once a combination of architectural and armorial types. Seals with arms alone are less common, but Guydo de Seynt Clere, Sheriff of Norfolk (1357), used his lion, with its forked and knotted tail, and placed it in front of a castle gate between two crosses ; while at a later date (1554) Sir John Porter, Sheriff of Nottingham, used the shield and crest of that family.

A stag's head, with the letter B, was used by Peter de Salford in 1365, as sheriff of the counties of Bedford and Buckingham. This is lettered : S' VIC' B' ET B' ; i.e. SIGILLUM VICECOMITIS BEDFORDIE ET BUCKINGHAMIE.

Hundreds must have used seals for certain purposes, but once again, they are very rare. The bailiff of the hundred of Blithing, county Suffolk, had a seal in the seventeenth century which represented a castle with domes and flags, and the hundred of Orlingbury had one a



century earlier. It is a simple inscription : + HUNDREDE OF ORLIBERE NORTH-AMTVN. Very similar is that of the hundred of Stapelhor, county Cambridge, which is inscribed : —STAP—YLHO S̄ : COM̄ : CANTEBRYGG. So, too, the Wapentake of Flaxwell, county Lincolnshire, had a seal inscribed : FLAX—WELL— ✱ SIGILL' · COM̄ · LINCOL'N · p. s'VIS. That of the hundred of Wangford, county Suffolk, has a crown above the inscription, which reads : S. REGIS : IN COMIT'. SUFF. (The seal of the king in the county of Suffolk). The matrix, like that of the South Erpingham hundred, is in the British Museum. Others are also known, viz. that of Hurstingston, county Hants, which has a blundered legend.<sup>1</sup> That of the hundred of Walshcroft is figured in "Archæological Journal";<sup>2</sup> that of Edmonton hundred, of which there is an impression at the Society of Antiquaries. All these are circular, but that of Flegg hundred, county Norfolk, is hexagonal. It has a Greek cross and the legend : SIGILLŪ DE HŪNDREDI WEST FLEGE NORF.<sup>3</sup> Yet another, inscribed SIGILLU GLOUCESTRIE HUNDR LONGELEY, is figured in the "Antiquary."<sup>4</sup> These seals were ordered by the Parliament held at Canterbury, when on 9 September, 1388, a statute to check "tramps" was enacted, each of whom had henceforth to produce a pass under a royal seal specially engraved, stating why and whither he was travelling, how long he proposed to be away, and other wholesome particulars. No example of such a seal used by a city or borough is known. The matrices of these seals show the holes for suspension by thongs to the person of the official using them.

<sup>1</sup> See "Arch. Journal," vol. VII, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> "Norf. Archæology," vol. I, p. 368.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. X, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. XXIV, p. 63.



## SEALS OF CORPORATE TOWNS

Early in the twelfth century towns began to grope their way towards an end which made them become almost persons in the eyes of the law. When they obtained, as at first they did obtain, a simple charter from the baron who owned them, they adopted at once a common seal making the device contain some allusion, at least, to the owner's arms. These early seals often underwent a change when a charter was afterwards granted by the king.

Maitland and Pollock cite the case of Ipswich in these words: "When, in 1200, the community of Ipswich received its charter from King John, one of their first acts was to obtain a common seal and commit it to the care of the two bailiffs and one other of the chief portmen; they were sworn to set it to no letter or instrument save for the common honour and profit of the burgesses of the town, and only to use it with the assent of their peers, that is, of the other chief portmen." This seal, when once obtained, brought the fortunate town into a line with religious houses and the privileges they held, and was, moreover, a tangible symbol of the borough's unity.

It is most natural that these common seals should allude to the great event, the birth of corporate life. Thus we find the royal lion added to the seals of Carlisle, Chichester, and Norwich; while in the case of Lincoln the allusion to the royal charter takes the form of the cross of St. George. So, too, with the greater ports after royalty interferes for good. The earlier type of the castle and galley is supplemented by the royal lion. On the other hand, boroughs directly founded and enfranchised



by the king, as those of Dartmouth and Winchester, incorporate the royal effigy, or at least a bust, in their seal. So, too, in such cases as that of Queenborough.

On the other hand, corporations rising out of direct ecclesiastical support introduce, as might be expected, ecclesiastical devices derived from their benefactors, the most conspicuous instance being that of the sword of St. Paul in the arms of London.

It must never be forgotten that the seal was the first and principal sign of office, shared at a distance with robe and mace, but the sign, *par excellence*, of the mayoralty in the exercise of which he could command attention and act even before royalty.<sup>1</sup>

The seals of towns are usually circular in form and exceedingly diverse in subject. We may attempt to classify them, but there will be many exceptions. As a rule religious expression is absent from the mind of the designer, and canting or allusive devices become a very favourite means of satisfying the burgesses' desires.

They can be roughly classified under the following heads: (1) Sacred, (2) Personal, (3) Architectural, (4) Maritime, (5) Armorial, (6) Peculiar, (7) Canting.

(1) *Sacred*.—The earlier seals, those of the thirteenth century, are almost confined to either representations of the Blessed Mary as the Divine Mother (the subject of the seal of Carlisle, Salisbury, and of the fourteenth-century seal of Stamford) or of the figures of saints, usually the patron of the town. The best-known instance is found on the thirteenth-century seal of the Corporation of London, the obverse of which represents St. Paul, with a drawn sword in his right hand and the banner of England

<sup>1</sup> "Brit. Arch. Assoc.," N.S., II, p. 231.



in the left, standing on a tower of his cathedral seen above one of the city gates, through which a general view is obtained. The gate is apparently meant for a river-gate, as the Thames lies in front. The reverse bears a figure of St. Thomas of Canterbury seated with worshipping groups of clergy and laity, while in the base is St. Paul's Cathedral. The inscription reads: SIGILLUM . BARONUM . LONDONIARUMO (The seal of the barons of London).

The seal of Leominster, of similar date, bears the effigy of St. Peter; that of King's Lynn the badge of St. John on the obverse and the figure of St. Margaret on the reverse, the patron and patroness respectively of its two chief churches.

(2) Seals of a personal character allusive to some conspicuous person connected with the history of the town are much less common. One occurs in the common seal of Grimsby. It represents Gryme (Gryem), said to have been a native of Souldburgh, in Denmark, who gained his living by piracy and fishing, but who, after being shipwrecked on the Lincolnshire coast, became the founder of that town. He is represented as a man of great stature, holding sword and circular shield; his protégé Havelok stands on the left armed with a battle-axe, while on the right is the Princess Goldburgh, whom he afterwards married.<sup>1</sup> The seal of Kingston-upon-Hull, *temp.* Edward I, presents King Edward I standing, with a lion couchant under his feet;<sup>2</sup> while that of Beverley has in like manner the figure of the local St. John of Beverley seated upon a throne.

(3) Architectural seals belong to an exceedingly large

<sup>1</sup> See the "Lay of Havelok the Dane." Oxford, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> "Br. Mus. Cat.," 5031.



class, and there is a certain appropriate character about the walls and gates portrayed upon them which bespeaks defence and defensive peace. It is impossible to mention more than a few. Bedford (fifteenth century) has a triple-towered castle borne upon a displayed eagle; Bideford, county Devon, a chapel upon a bridge of four arches, with the patron saint of the town, St. Mary (this is of the same date as last); Bridgenorth (twelfth century) a triple-towered castle with the legend: + SIGILLUM COMUNE VILLAE DE BRIDGNORTH; Bridgwater, a castle and bridge; Bristol, on the obverse the castle, on the reverse a vessel leaving the harbour: this is fourteenth century. Cambridge's first corporate seal shows a bridge of four arches over the River Cam and the royal arms; this is also fourteenth-century date. Chester has a rather elaborate castle upon its seal, and badges of lion of England and the garb of Chester. It is of late seventeenth-century date. Colchester has also a castle and a bridge of three arches, with fish swimming in the water. The reverse bears the figure of St. Helen, who was born here. In the seal of Coventry (see figure) we have an elephant bearing upon his back a triple-towered castle. The common seal of Exeter shows a building of rather peculiar nature, with circular towers of two stories. It is of thirteenth-century date. Lincoln uses a view of the city from without, with armorials on the walls. It is dated 1511. That of Newcastle-under-Lyme is of early date (thirteenth century), and represents in the foreground the sea, with the town hall above, with a towered edifice, on which is a flag between two men-at-arms, the one with a banner, the other winding a horn. Three shields of arms, viz. those of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, England, and



Chester, adorn the walls. That of Newcastle-upon-Tyne is of similar design and date. Northampton has a seal with the head of a knight, with banner and cross-bow appearing above the walls. This seal is so peculiar that it is worthy of a more detailed description. The arched gateway is itself of unusual form, and has strange projections at the sides, while the whole is powdered with quatrefoils. The projections may be meant for flanking turrets, and the quatrefoils for cruciform loopholes. From the Lombardic characters of the legend the seal should be of early thirteenth-century date. The seal of the mayor of this town (*c.* 1300) possibly represents the town gates after reconstruction. The gate is flanked by lions, of which Dr. Cox<sup>1</sup> says they were probably "suggested by the fact of Northampton, not only being a chartered town of the royal demesne, but peculiarly associated with an almost continuous succession of royal visitors." This seal, no doubt, suggested the subsequent arms of the town:

The seal of the town of Nottingham is also architectural, as is that of Pontefract, Scarborough, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Taunton, Warwick (see figure), Wells, Winchester, and Windsor. Worcester varies somewhat and takes as type a view of the cathedral church seen above the wall of the city. York has a very early seal dated by Birch 1100-8. The castle upon it is three-towered, but of early design, the whole wall covered with lozengy diaper work and embattled. The reverse bears the effigy of St. Peter. The inscription reads: + SIGILLUM ECLË: SANCTI PETRI: CAT. EBORAE. The second seal of thirteenth-century date retains the triple-towered castle, but the

<sup>1</sup> "Records of the Borough of Northampton," II, p. 143.



legend reads : + SIGILLUM CIVIUM : EBORACI. The former seal cannot be, strictly speaking, the seal of a corporate town, as it would scarcely have been existent at so early a date.

Another widespread class of seals have also a common type, namely, those of seaports ; upon them a prominent feature in the design is the figure of a ship.



SEAL OF THE BOROUGH OF WARWICK

The thirteenth-century seal of Hastings shows a war vessel of the period manned by mariners in mail, while its banners bear the arms of England and those of the Cinque Ports. The vessel is shown ramming an enemy and driving it under water. The motto reads : SIGILLUM : COMMUNE BARONUM : DE HASTINGGIS. The reverse bears a representation of St. Michael combating the dragon and the legend : \* DRACO : CRUELIS : TE VINCET : VIS : MICHAELIS (O cruel dragon, the might of Michael hath



conquered thee). Hythe uses for seal a one-masted lymphad with two seamen furling its sail. The vessel has castles at either end, in which are a trumpeter and the steersman. In the sea are seven fish. That of Lydd



SEAL OF HASTINGS

includes a view of a church with a tall spire, from behind which a one-masted lymphad appears. The inscription reads: S' : COMUNE : BARONV̄ : DOMINI : REGIS : ANGLIE : DE : LYDE (The common seal of the barons of our lord the King of England, of Lyde). The seal of Romney



dates from Elizabeth's charter (1558), but the date is probably a mere addition, since the seal resembles those of other ports. It bears a simple one-masted ship.

The seal of Rye is of fifteenth-century date; its one-masted ship has a mainsail set, with the banner of St. George flying above its crow's nest and a second similar flag upon the forecastle, while in the poop stands a banner-bearer fully armed. The inscription reads: SIGILLUM: BARONUM: DE RYA. The reverse shows the church of St. Mary with a figure of that saint and the legend: AVE: MARIA: GRACIA: PLENA: DÑS: TECUM: BENEDICTA TU: IN: MULIERIBUS (Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord be with thee. Blessed be thou among women).

Winchelsea has a variation of a mariner in the rigging of a one-masted ship, the sail of which is furled. There are two trumpeters at the stern and the arms of England. The reverse is architectural and ecclesiastical, and is very elaborate, representing, among other subjects, Becket's martyrdom, with the legend: + EGIDIO: THOME: LAUDUM: PLEBS: CANTRIA: PME: NE: SIT: IN: AUGARIA: GREX: SUUS: OMNE: VIA.

Allied to seals such as these are the local seals for maritime matters, such as we find at Bristol. That used *temp.* Edward II is in reality a royal seal. Of other places with ships for device we may mention Ipswich, spelt in the legend GYPEWIC, Lymington, and Southampton. In this case the sail of the vessel is sprinkled with crosses pattée.

Another class of seals (4) of less interest is that in which the principal device consists of the armorial bearings of the town. Such a seal is that of the town of Banbury, with a sun for charge and the allusive legend: SIGILLUM. BURGI.



DE . BANBURI . DOMINUS . NOBIS . SOL . & SCUTUM (The seal of the borough of Banbury: the Lord is our sun and shield). A later seal has a floral device. That of Great Bedwyn, county Wilts, has the town arms (a tower) with a griffin crest; while Bewdley, county Worcester, used an anchor and a fetterlock between a sword and rose, with the words, SIGILLUM LIBERTATIS BURGI DE BEWDLEY, a star occurring between each word of the inscription. The seventeenth-century seal of Boston is charged with the town arms—three crowns, with foliage, and letters B and R upon a tun. And, lastly, the town of Kingston-on-Thames has upon its seal three salmon and the letter K between the lions of England, all within a cusped quatrefoil.

Closely allied to these are the canting seals which many towns have adopted. We find an example in the swallow (Hirondelle) of the town of Arundel; the Dane with a wood axe standing by a tree, which serves as subject for the corporate seal of the town of Daventry, late sixteenth century in date. The seal of Derby has a deer lodged in a park or by. Hartlepool, a deer and pool; as Hertford has a hart at a ford, with the castle of the town behind it. Huntington naturally lends itself to this class of representation, and here we have a bowman winding his horn, with two hounds about to pull down their quarry: this is, however, a seventeenth-century seal. Perhaps the best-known is the canting seal of Oxford—an ox passing an heraldic ford represented as barry wavy of four. But the most interest of all attaches to the seal of Lichfield, which is of late date, but very peculiar (see figure). Here we have a battlefield strewn with weapons, a flag and crown, and three dead bodies in allusion to the name Lich (corpse) and feld.



Seals which do not fit in with any group named by us above we may call Peculiar. Such is that of Shrewsbury, upon which a view of the town finds place. Such, again, is that of Beccles, the device being an enclosure of hurdles containing a horse, ass, and ox, with a legend as follows : SIGILLŪ + CŌE + NOVE + INCORPORACŌIS + P · BECCLES · FFENE. The mayoralty of Coventry shows on its



SEAL OF LICHFIELD

seal an elephant bearing a triple-towered castle, on the flag of which is the device of three scimitars and the words : + SIGILLUM · MARIORATUS · CIVITATIS · COVENTRIE. On the seal of Halifax is a device what is perhaps meant to allude to the gibbet law of the forest of Hardwick, viz. on a mount a triple-branched tree, on the right a man in a hat standing, on the left a woman hanging from the tree : + SIGILL · CORP · APVD · HALLIF · 1662.



## SEALS OF TRADING CORPORATIONS

## SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS GILDS

Religious and social gilds arose at a remote date, possibly when the family as a unit proved itself insufficient to cope with the greater scope of labour opening before its



SEAL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY

members. The gilds which concern us were not, however, of this archaic character, but were none the less popular. They were formed in numbers whenever and wherever a few brethren and sisters agreed to render mutual aid to one another in either religious, social, or trade affairs, and sometimes in all three. These brotherhoods, bound together by a common rule, presided over by their master and alderman, flourished in the towns of England and also on the Continent, and acquired great



wealth and prestige. Among the duties they very ably carried out was that of providing masses for living and dead, aid to those who were sick and aged, or who had met through no fault of their own with trade losses, matters dealing with schools and education, and such public works as the provision of a town clock. For many of these purposes a seal was needed, and such they duly provided themselves with. As many of these institutions were wealthy, their seals were carefully cut, and their good workmanship was in many cases remarkable. These institutions, on account of their prosperity, excited the cupidity of Henry VIII, and a survey of their possessions prior to confiscation was carried out. It was, however, destined that this iniquitous deed should be brought about in the first year of his son and successor, and in that year the social and religious gild as it was known to the medieval merchant ceased to exist. The fraternities mentioned flourished side by side with, and perhaps produced, craft gilds, such as the London companies. These escaped the general spoliation on the plea that they existed solely for commercial protection, and had no religious leaven, and that since they managed all matters relating to their special trade, it would be a serious blow at the prosperity of London and the provinces if they were wholly abolished. It is impossible here to deal at all fully with what would else be a fascinating subject, nor is it necessary, since it has already been fully treated in Toulmin Smith's "English Gilds."<sup>1</sup>

If an examination be made of any series of seals of the social and religious gilds, it will be seen that many of them take for device the patron saint. The gild of St. Nicholas

<sup>1</sup> Early English Text Society, 1870.



of Worcester (figured by Toulmin Smith, p. 207) represents the patron beneath a canopy, with a kneeling figure below and the legend: SIGILLŪ : COE' SIU' NICH: WIGORN. (The seal of the community of St. Nicholas, of Worcester). The seal of the famous gild of the Holy Cross, of Stratford-on-Avon, is a most delicate specimen of fifteenth-century work. The device represents the saintly patrons under a five-fold canopy, with the legend: SIGILLUM COMŪNE GILDE SCĒ CRUCIS DE STRATFORDE SUPER AVON. Very similar to this in design, but less elaborate, was that of the Holy Cross Gild, of Birmingham. The legend was also almost identical: SIGILL': COMUNE: GYLDE: SANCTE: CRUCIS: DE: BERMĠGGEHAM.<sup>1</sup> The seal of the gild of St. Anne, of Knowle, is another example of a vesica-shaped matrix, and is an exceedingly rich composition. The printed oval is more than three inches in length and represents St. Anne instructing the Blessed Mary, the central composition being flanked by the figures in lower canopies of St. John the Baptist and St. Laurence, while in the basement are two ecclesiastics in surplices—obviously chaplains of the gild. The legend reads: S' FRAT' NITAT' GILDE SCÖR' JOH'IS BAPTISTE & LAURENCII AC SCĒ ANNE DE KNOLL. It is figured in Bickley's "Register of the Gild of Knowle," p. 15.

Among the craft gilds the foremost place is taken by such powerful and ancient corporations as the city companies of London, and in these, sacred devices are usual, at least in the more ancient seals. Thus the fifteenth-century seal of the Company of Brewers bears the assumption of the Blessed Mary; the Holy Mother is shown borne up by demi-angels, while in the clouds above the

<sup>1</sup> See Toulmin Smith, "English Gilds," p. 250, where the seal is figured.



Almighty Father awaits in readiness to receive her glorified soul. The inscription reads: SIGILLUM : COMMUNITATIS : MISTERII : BRACIATORUM : LONDONI (The seal of the community of the mystery of brewers of London). The coronation of the Virgin appears on the seal of the Company of Drapers. In her robes a number of poor find shelter, and above the Almighty Father places the crown upon her head, while the Holy Spirit is also present in the form of a dove. The legend reads: SIGILLU' . COM'UNE . FRATERNITAT' . BE' . MARIE . MISTERE . PANNARIOR' LONDON' (The common seal of the Fraternity of the Blessed Mary, the mystery of drapers, of London). The assumption of the Virgin finds place also upon the seal of the Leather-sellers, while the Mercers have their well-known "demi-Virgin." Our blessed Lord in act of benediction occupies the chief place in the seal of the Wax-chandlers, with the Almighty Father issuing from clouds of glory above, while in the basal portion are three saints. The Armourers' Company took for their device the mythical combat between St. George and the dragon—a subject very dear to the medieval mind. With this are placed two shields—those of the company and the saint. The inscription runs: SIGILLUM COMMUNE ARTIS ARMURARIORUM CIVITATIS LONDONEARUM (The common seal of the craft of armourers of the city of the Londoners). In like way the figure of St. John the Baptist, with the company's arms, occurs on the seal of the Merchant Taylors, but the Girdlers, Glovers, and Tallow-chandlers contented themselves with an heraldic display. As an example of the seal of a craft gild that of the Fullers of the town of Warwick is figured. As may be seen, the seal is beautifully designed, and represents the adoration of the Magi.



## SEALS OF STATUTE MERCHANTS

Connected with local trade are the seals of the statute staple. These were the outcome of the statute of Acton Burnell, *de Mercatoribus*, passed in the year 1283 and succeeded a little later, viz. in 1285, by the *Statutum Mercatorum*. These seals were ordered for the recognisance



SEAL OF THE FULLERS OF WARWICK

of debts, and thus were attached to bonds, etc., by narrow slips of parchment cut parallel to the lower edge of the document. The matrix was ordered to be of two pieces, viz. the king's seal and the clerk's seal. The design upon these seals is tolerably uniform. It consists of a bust of the king placed, as heralds say, *effronté*, that is, full-face, usually with a lion of England below and two castles above. This design appears on the merchant statute seals



of Bristol, Chester, Lincoln, London, Nottingham, Oxford, Shrewsbury, and York, but the castles in the seals of London and Chester have only single turrets in place of the more general triple-turreted building. A slight difference occurs in the seal of Preston, in which a figure of the sun and moon takes the place of the castles. In that of Hereford these are placed over the castles.

The statute merchants' seal of Northampton (figured in Dr. Cox's "Records of the Borough of Northampton," II, p. 142) is like that of London, in that the name of the town is omitted from the legend, which reads: *S' REGIS EDWARDI AD RECOGNI DEBITORUM*. In this case the clerk's seal is also known, which is often not the case.

The statute merchants' clerk used a seal with the figure of St. Andrew on his cross between eight fleur-de-lis, four on either side, and the legend: *S : CLICĒ : DE : STAT : MEAT : NORTHTON* (Seal of the clerk of the statute merchant of Northampton). Here, too, may be mentioned the rare seal of the cloths of Northampton, made in compliance with the first Parliament of Edward, when duties on exports, viz. on wool, woolfels, and leather, were granted to the king. There are very few of these seals known; the Northampton example has the king's head, and about it in large Lombardic characters the words: *S. PANORUM, NORHAMPTON*.

#### STAPLES

By the statute of 43 Edward III (A.D. 1369) staples were ordered to be established of wool, woolfels, and leather, at Newcastle, Kingston-upon-Hull, St. Botolph, Yarmouth, Queenborough, Westminster, Chichester, Winchester, Exeter, and Bristol, so that no wool, wool-



fels, or leather should be carried out of England except it be brought to one of the staples to be weighed, cocketted, and customed; and all wools brought to the staples of Westminster and Winchester to be weighed by the standard, and each sack and sarplar sealed with the seals of the mayor of the staple and the constables.

The staple of Westminster used a seal blazoned with the handsome arms of the "merchants of the staple," viz. barry wavy on a chief a lion passant. The staple of Boston (St. Botolph) had an effigy of the saint with a wool-pack before him and the words: SIGIL' STAPULE DE SANCTO BOTULFO.

The mayor of the staple of Bristol used for seal a lion's face within eight fleur-de-lis. The mayor of the staple of Exeter adopted on his seal the device of a triple-towered castle, with a lion guarding its entrance, and the legend: S' MAIORIS STAPULE CIVITATIS EXON.

The staple seal of Poole, county Dorset, shows a lion's face between three fleur-de-lis, with the marginal inscription: ✱ SIGILL' STAPULE IN PORTU DE POLE (The seal of the staple of the port of Poole). Southampton is somewhat similar, but the mask is between two fleur-de-lis and four roses.

#### AUTHORITIES

The principal authority upon the municipal seals is "Corporation Plate and Insignia." By H. Jewitt and W. H. St. John Hope. Two vols., 1895.

An account is given in these pages of almost the whole of the seals of all the boroughs of England and Wales, arranged under their respective counties. Illustrations are supplied of the seals of Appleby, Barnsley, Betley, Bedford, Bodmin, Bridgenorth, Burford, Burton-on-Trent,



Caerleon, Camelford, Caernarvon, Chesterfield, Chipping Sodbury, Chipping Wycombe, Colchester, Congleton, Cowbridge, Derby, Dewsbury, Durham, East Retford, Evesham, Exeter, Fordwick, Gloucester, Harlech, Hastings, Hedon, Hemel Hempstead, Hartford, High Wycombe, Kidderminster, Leominster, Liverpool, London, Marazion, Oxford, Plymouth, Rochester, Scarborough, Tewkesbury, Thaxted, Totnes, Wakefield, Wallingford, Winchester, Wokingham, and Worcester.

"Borough Records of Northampton," C. C. Cox, contains a valuable account of the seals of that town, and very ably illustrated, including a thirteenth-century town seal, showing the gate of the earlier walls, a mayor's seal (*temp.* Edward I) with a later gate, statute merchant seal of 1319, the statute merchants' clerk's seal (fifteenth century), and the rare cloth subsidy seal (*temp.* Edward I).

There are also isolated papers: "On the Municipal Seals of England and Wales," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, XV, 434-55. "Seal of the Borough of Appleby," "Cumb. and West.," XIII, 5-8. "Seals of Bristol," "Clifton Antiq. Club," IV, 58-70. "Seals of the Sussex Cinque Ports," "Sussex Arch. Coll.," I, 14-25. "The Seals of the Barons and Bailiffs of Hastings," "Sussex Arch. Coll.," XL, 261-4. "Seals under the Statute Merchant," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, IX, 253-61. "Matrices of Seals belonging to Birmingham," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, XV, 16-21. "Seal of the Hundred of Langley," "Bristol and Glouc. Arch. Soc.," vol. XV.



## CHAPTER XII

### SEALS OF UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL CORPORATIONS

THE first seal of the University of Cambridge is in shape a pointed oval. It represents the Chancellor seated in academical habit between two scholars, and in the basement is a bridge over the River Cam, in which fish are seen swimming. The legend reads : SIGILLUM : UNIVERSITATIS : CANTEBRIGIE ; it is said to date *circa* 1260. The second seal (*c.* 1410) is similar in type, but of elaborate workmanship. In the third seal (A.D. 1580) the scholars on either side of the Chancellor are replaced by Masters of Arts, one of whom carries the chained volume of University Statutes, the other an open book. Above the chair of the Chancellor is the threefold name of God, and on either side the royal arms, *temp.* Elizabeth, and in base those of the University and the legend : × MARS × MUSAS × SIGILLUM - COE - CANCELLARII - MROR - ET - SCHOLARIV - UNIVERSITAT - CANTEBRIGIE (The common seal of the Chancellor, masters, and scholars of the University of Cambridge). The Chancellor has also his own privy seal, which varies with the individual. Michael House and King's Hall, both afterwards incorporated into Trinity College, bore the one, St. Michael trampling the dragon underfoot ; the other, King Edward III, seated, holding a model of the



church, and presenting the foundation charter to the master, the legend reading : SIGILLŪ : COMUNE : CUSTODIS ET SCHOLARUM AULE : REGIS : CANTEBRIGGIE (The common seal of the warden and scholars of King's Hall, Cambridge).

The principal device in the first seal of Clare College is the effigy of the foundress, Lady Elizabeth de Burgh, sister and coheir of Gilbert, Earl of Clare, who is shown holding the statute book of the foundation and presenting the charter to nine kneeling representatives; there are also shields of arms and attendant saints.

Pembroke College used an effigy of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, and his Countess, Mary de St. Paul, with a model of the building and shield of arms. Gonville and Caius College the annunciation of the Blessed Mary, with Bishop Bateman of Norwich (1344-54) kneeling below. Trinity Hall appropriately seals with the Holy Trinity or majesty, with on either side a branch with heads representing the whole host of heaven, and the arms of William Bateman, the founder. Corpus Christi had a seal with the coronation of our Lady, and in base a model of the college held by figures representing the gilds which founded it. King's College took for subject the assumption of our Lady, with attendant figures of St. Nicholas and of Henry VI, together with shields of arms. The inscription reads : SIGILLŪ : CŌE PREPOSITĪ & SCHOLARIUM : COLLEGII : REGALIS BĒ MARIE AND SŪ NICHOLAI DE CANTEBĒR. (The common seal of the provost and scholars of the Royal College of the Blessed Mary and St. Nicholas, of Cambridge). Queen's College takes for its seal the effigies of its patrons, SS. Margaret and Bernard, with the president and four fellows of the college kneeling in



prayer, together with the arms of Margaret of Anjou, viz. quarterly Hungary, Naples, Jerusalem, Anjou, Bar, and Lorraine. So, too, St. Catharine's College, which has the figure of that saint, with the legend: SIGIL' CŌIE · COLLEGII SIUE AULE SCĒ KATERNIE VIRGIS DE CÂTEBRE-GIA (The common seal of the College or Hall of St. Katharine the Virgin, of Cambridge). Jesus College, formerly the priory of St. Radegund, had as a priory a seal with that saint's figure, but as a college (A.D. 1496) our Lord in benediction between St. Mary and St. John the evangelist, with an angel bearing a shield with the five stigmata of the sacred passion. St. John the Evangelist is the central figure in the seal of St. John's College, but there are also badges in reference to "Lady Margaret." Magdalene, Sidney Sussex, and Emmanuel have armorial seals. That of Trinity bears on the obverse the baptism of Christ, and on the reverse an effigy of King Henry VIII.

The great seal of the University of Oxford is similar in general idea to that of Cambridge. Like it, it represents the Chancellor seated, but with three scholars in their robes and six others below them in a double row. The legend reads: SIGILL' CANCELARII ET UNIVERSITATIS OXONIENSIS (The seal of the Chancellor and University of Oxford). A later seal reduces the number of scholars to two, but adds three-quarter figures of proctors; and in the base the arms of the city. The seal of the proctors represents King Alfred, with scholars, etc., and is lettered: SIG. PROC. COLL MAG. AUL. UNIV. OXON. (The seal of the College of Proctors, of the Great Hall of Oxford University).

University College bears on its seal the figure of St. Cuthbert, with the head of St. Oswald to the left, and in the basal portion William, Archdeacon of Durham, the



founder, with a group of scholars. The border inscription reads: S' COMMUNE · SCHOLARIUM ATRI WILL'I DE DUN-ELMA STUDENCIŪ OXON̄. (The common seal of the hall of scholars of William of Durham, students of Oxford). Balliol takes for seal the subject of the Holy Mother and the Infant Christ, with the founder and his wife, John Balliol, of Barnard Castle, and the Lady Devorguilla, with their respective coat armour, each figure holding a model of the college buildings, with the words DOM'S SCOLARIŪ D' BALL'O. The legend is peculiar, and reads: S' 9Ē: D': BALL' : SCUTA : NOTĀT : ST̄ PIA : V'GO · T · DĀTĒS. In the extended form: SIGILLUM COMMUNE DE BALLIOLO SCUTA NOTANT STANTES, PIA VIRGO, DOMUM TIBI DANTEM. The seal of this college *ad causas* has the figure of St. Katherine. Merton College had at first a seal *ad causas* with the Holy Mother and Child beneath a canopy and a man praying below. Oriel used the same type—the annunciation and Adam de Brome, the founder, kneeling beneath. On the seal of Queen's College its patroness, Queen Philippa of Hainault, appears, with her shield of arms, while yet again are those of her confessor, Robert de Eglesfield. The later seal shows Queen Elizabeth in Philippa's place. The seal of dignity of New College gives on the right St. Swithun, on the left William de Wykeham, and above these the annunciation, while below are the arms of the bishop and the college. All Souls has a peculiar design—a doom. In the centre is seen our Lord on His throne surrounded by saints, in the base a number of dead in the act of resurrection, while beneath are the arms of the founders, Henry VI and Archbishop Chicheley. Brasenose takes a majesty for its device, with the attendant figures of SS. Chad and Hugh, together with the shields



of William Smith, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and the college. Christ Church also adopted the same device, while a curious variation—the figure of the Almighty Father—terminates in a cloak, in which three persons—a king, an archbishop, and a cardinal—are wrapped. Below is a shield of the arms of Cardinal Wolsey.

Next in interest to the seals of the Universities and their separate foundations are the seals of the great public schools, and these deserve a certain amount of notice. The device of the Eton seal, the Royal College of St. Mary, represents the coronation of the Virgin, surrounded by angels, while the Almighty Father places the crown of heaven on her head. Angels on either side hold shields of arms of Henry VI, and below that of the college the legend reads: SIGILLŪ · COMMUNE · PREPOSITI · COLLEGII REGULUS · BEATE · MARIE · DE · ETON. The seal of Harrow is a rebus, a lion rampant, in allusion to the name of John Lyon, the founder. The legend reads: DONORUM DEI DISPENSATIO FIDELIO (The faithful dispenser of the gift of God). The seal of Rugby bears the arms of Laurence Sheriff, the founder. It is of eighteenth-century date. The College of St. Mary, Winchester, shows on its seal SS. Peter and Paul, and above them the annunciation, while on either side is a shield with the arms of William of Wykham, who is represented in the basement of the seal kneeling in prayer.

The smaller schools of ancient foundation have various devices. The effigy of our Lord with His disciples in the act of blessing children is found on the seal of the school of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, and in an altered form on that of Sandwich. God the Father is found on the seal of Crediton Grammar School (A.D. 1674); the blessed Mary



and the Infant Jesus on that of Hartlebury (A.D. 1558). St. John the Baptist forms the central device on the seal of the grammar school of Kirkby, Ravensworth (A.D. 1555), and St. James the Great on that of Richmond.

The effigy of the founder, Queen Elizabeth, is found at Ashborne (A.D. 1585), Middleton, and Southampton (A.D. 1584); while in the seal of Wirksworth School the founder, Anthony Gell, of Hopton, appears with his



SEAL OF BIRMINGHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL

shield of arms (A.D. 1565). The seal of Birmingham Grammar School (A.D. 1552) has five figures seated at a table (see figure). The headmaster and his scholars form the device for Kirkby-in-Lonsdale, with the distich—

STET, SCHOLA. DE KIRKBY IN LONSDAL  
DEUS ET PIA PRINCEPS  
DY FAVEANT PUERIS ELISABETA SCHOLIS;

and also in that of Macclesfield; in this case the pedagogue alone appears, and in the seals of the schools of Sevenoaks (A.D. 1560) and Southwark (A.D. 1576). Sheffield has the representation of a single scholar within



an aureole of arrows and a text from Psalm CXVIII. 105 :  
LUCERNE PEDIBUS MEIS VERBUM MEUM (Thy word is a  
light to my feet). One or two examples of a rebus may be  
found. Thus Atherstone, county Warwick, has a school  
seal with seven adders issuing from a stone slab. That of  
Kidderminster is also allusive.

Armorial devices are employed by Brentwood, Heens-  
worth, Highgate, Leach, and many others ; while a book  
is found on that of Cheveley Grammar School and Il-  
minster, in this last case with the motto : LEAR - NINGE  
GAY - NETH - HO - NOR. A cross and skull appears on  
the seal of Nuneaton free school, and is less pleasant.  
The disused seal of the corporation of Stafford served for  
the grammar school of that town, and in the same way  
the ancient seal of the abbey of Louth passed on to the  
new foundation.

We may fitly conclude with a notice of the beautiful  
Elizabethan seal of the Leicester hospital in Warwick,  
founded by Elizabeth's favourite, Robert, Earl of Essex,  
for decayed soldiers. The obverse bears in the centre an  
ideal representation of the hospital, flanked by the crowned  
lion of Dudley and the muzzled bear of his brother's War-  
wick earldom ; while below are three slips of forget-me-  
not, perchance a reminder of the earl, his little son, and  
his brother. The reversé is an ancient and rugged trunk,  
broken and lopped away, and across its roots the bear  
badge of the House of Warwick, a token, doubtless, of  
the ancient gilds of the Holy Trinity and St. George,  
founded by the Beauchamps, and which Robert Dudley's  
hospital succeeded. The old trunk has, however, blos-  
somed anew into six flower-sprays representing the towns,  
etc., benefited by the Earl's charity, viz. his retainers,



and the poor soldiers of Kenilworth, Warwick, Stratford, Wotton-under-Edge, and Erlingham. The legend reads : CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS, etc. (see figure).



OBVERSE OF THE SEAL OF LEICESTER HOSPITAL

There are no doubt many other hospital seals of great interest, such as those figured by Dr. Cox in "Borough Records of Northampton," II, Plate vi. The earlier of these is of thirteenth-century date, and has the device of St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist in a pointed oval separated by an upright support surmounted by an *agnus Dei*. The legend reads : SIGILL . HOSPITAL . SCI . JOHIS . BAPTISTE . ET . S . I . EWANG . DE NORHANT. The other represents the seal of the hospital of St. Leonard. It is late and poor in execution, but curious, since beneath the figure of the saint is seen a gateway



(the town gate on the south bridge) surmounted by a crown indicative of the royal foundation of the hospital. The legend reads: S. COE · DOMUS · SCĪ · LEONARDI · JUXTA · NORTHAMPTON (The common seal of the house of St. Leonard next Northampton).

## AUTHORITIES

"Seals of the Colleges and University of Cambridge," "Proc. Soc. of Antiq.," second series, X, 225-52. "The Seals of the University of Cambridge." By W. H. St. John Hope, 1883. "Seals of Grammar Schools," "Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.," XII, 55-72, 145-55, 223-34; XIII, 311-26.



REVERSE OF THE SEAL OF LEICESTER HOSPITAL







## APPENDIX

### TABLE OF INSCRIPTIONS ON THE GREAT SEALS

I Edward the Confessor. (i) “+ Sigillum eadvardi Anglorv’ Basilei”; *rev. ibid.*, but “Anglorvm”; size  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. (ii) As reverse of (i); size  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. (iii) Size  $1\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{7}{8}$  in.

William I (A.D. 1066-87). (i) Size  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in.; *obv.* “+ Hoc Normannorum · Willelmvm · Nosce · Patronvm si ·”; *rev.* “Hoc. Anglis · Regem. signo. fatearis eundem.” (ii) Size  $1\frac{7}{8}$  in.; inscription as last.

William II (1087-1100). Size  $3\frac{3}{10}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* “+ Willelmus Di gra’ Rex Anglorv’.”

Henry I (1100-35). (i, A.D. 1100) Size  $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  in.; “+ Henric’ [? Dei gracia Rex] Anglorvm.” (ii) Size  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* as last. (iii, A.D. 1100-6) Size  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in.; inscription possibly as last. (iv, 1103-6) Size  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in.; “+ Henricvs · Dei · gracia · Rex · Anglorvm ·” (v, A.D. 1124-33) Size  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in.; *obv.* as last; *rev.* “+ Henricus Dei gratia Dux Normannorum.”

Stephen (A.D. 1135-54). (i) Size  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in.; *obv.* “+ Stephanus Dei gratia · Rex · Anglorvm”; *rev.* similar, but “Dux Normannorum.” (ii, *circa* 1144) Size  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* as last.

[MATILDA (A.D. 1141). Size  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in.; “+ Mathildis Dei gratia Romanorum Regina.”]



- Henry II (1154-89). (i) Size  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in.; “+ Henricus · Dei · gratia · Rex · Anglorum.”; *rev.* “+ Henr’: Dei : gra’: Dux : Normanor’ : et : Aquit’ : et : com’ : Andeg’.” (ii, A.D. 1171-4) Size  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in.; *obv.* as last; *rev.* “+ Henricus : Dux : Normannor’ : et : comes : Andegavor’ :” (iii) Size 4 in.; *obv.* as last; *rev.* unknown. (iv) Size  $3\frac{5}{8}$  in.; *obv.* unknown, *rev.* as reverse of (ii).
- Richard I (A.D. 1189-99). (i, A.D. 1189) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in.; *obv.* “+ Ricardus Dei gracia Rex Anglorvm”; *rev.* “+ Ricard’ Dux Normannorum et Aquitanorvm et comes Andegavorum.” (ii, A.D. 1189-99) Size  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* as last.
- John (A.D. 1199-1216). (i, A.D. 1200) Size 4 in.; “+ Johannes : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dominvs : Hibernie”; *rev.* “+ Joh’s : Dux : Normannie : et Aquitannie : et : comes Andegavie.”
- Henry III (A.D. 1216-72). (i, A.D. 1243) Size  $3\frac{7}{8}$  in.; “\* Henricus : Dei : gratia : Rex : Anglie : Dominvs : Hybernie”; *rev.* “\* Henricus : Dux : Normannie : et : Aquitanie : comes : Andegavie.” (ii) Size  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in.; *obv.* as last; *rev.* as last. (iii) Size  $3\frac{7}{8}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* “+ Henricus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dominus : Hybernie : Dux : Aquitanie.”
- Edward I (A.D. 1272-1307). Size 4 in.; *obv.* and *rev.* “+ Edwardus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dominvs Hybernie : Dux : Aquitanie.”
- Edward II (A.D. 1307-27). Size 4 in.; *obv.* and *rev.* as last.
- Edward III (A.D. 1327-77). (i, 1327) *obv.* and *rev.* as last. (ii) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; “Edwardus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dn’s : Hybernie : Dux : Aquitanie”; *rev.* as *obv.* (iii, A.D. 1338) *obv.* “Edward : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dominus : Hibernie : et : Dux : Aquitanie”; *rev.* *ibid.*, but wanting the word “et.” (iv, A.D. 1340) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in.; “Edwardus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Francie : et : Anglie : Dn’s : Hybernie : et Dux : Aquitanie”; *rev.* the same. (v, A.D. 1340-7?) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in. “+ Edwardus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Francie : et Anglie : et : Dominvs : Hibernie”; *rev.* as *obv.*, but no initial cross. (vi, A.D. 1340-72) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; “+ Edwardus Dei gratia Rex. Francie et Anglie et Dominvs Hibernie”; *rev.* “gracia,”



not "gratia," otherwise similar. (vii, A.D. 1360-77) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; *obv.* and *rev.* "Edwardvs : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : Dn's : Hibernie : et : Acquitannie." (viii, A.D. 1372-77) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; "Edwardus : Dei : gratia : Rex : Francie : et : Anglie : et : Dn's : Hibernie."

Richard II (A.D. 1377-99). (i) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; as Edward III (viii), but "Ricardus" in room of "Edwardus." (ii) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; as Edward III (vi), with change of name, "Ricardus" for "Edwardus."

Henry IV. As Richard II. (i) "Henricus" in room of "Ricardus." (ii, A.D. 1411) Size  $4\frac{7}{8}$  in.; *obv.* "Henricus Dei gra' Rex Anglie et Francie et Dn's Hibernie," as *rev.*, with "Dn's" extended.

Henry V (A.D. 1413-22). (i) unidentified; (ii, A.D. 1415) Size  $4\frac{7}{8}$  in.; as last, viz. Hen. IV (ii).

Henry VI (A.D. 1422-61). (i) As last. (ii) As last. (iii, A.D. 1423) Size  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in.; *obv.* "+ Sigillvm : Regivm : in absentia : Magni : Ordinatvm." (iv, A.D. 1425) Size  $3\frac{7}{8}$  in.; "Henricus : Dei : gracia : Francorvm : et : Anglie : Rex." (v, A.D. 1425) Size  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in.; legend . . . ? (vi, A.D. 1435) Size  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in.; legend unknown. (vii, A.D. 1440) Size  $3\frac{5}{8}$  in.; legend as (iv).

Edward IV (1461-83). (i, A.D. 1461) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in.; "Edward' : Dei : gracia : Rex : Francie : et : Anglie : et : Dn's : Hibernie," as *obv.* (ii, A.D. 1461-70) Size  $4\frac{7}{10}$  in.; "Edwardus : Dei : gracia : Rex : Anglie : et : Francie : et : Dn's : Hib'nie"; *rev.* has last two words extended. (iii) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; "+ Edwardus Dei gra Rex Fra'cie et Anglie et Dominus Hibernie," with a fleur-de-lis between each word, and two roses at end of the legend; *rev.* "Edward Dei gra' Rex Francie et Anglie et Dominus Hibernie"; stops fleur-de-lis, lozenges, and a cross fleurie. (iv) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in.; "+ Edwardus Dei gracia Anglie et Francie et Dominus Hibernie"; a rose for stops between each word. (v) Size  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in.; as last.

Edward V (1483). (i) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; as last.



Richard III (1483-85). (i) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; as Edward IV (iii), with change of name to "Ricardus."

Henry VII (1485-1509). (i) Size  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in.; "Henricus : Dei : g'ra : Rex : Anglie : et Francie : et Dominus : Hibernie"; *rev.* has "g'ra" extended to "gracia."

Henry VIII (1509-47). (i, A.D. 1509-32?) As last. (ii, A.D. 1532-41) "Henricus Octavvus Dei gra' Anglie et Francie Rex fidei Dēfensor et Domin' Hibernie"; *rev.* "+ Henricus Octav'" etc.; stops on *obv.*, mullets between four points, on *rev.* fleur-de-lis. (iii, A.D. 1542-47) Size  $4\frac{7}{8}$  in.; "Henric' : Octav's : Dei : gratia : Anglie : Francie : et : Hibernie : Rex : Fidei : defensor : et : i' : te'ra : ecclesiæ : Anglicane : et : Hibernice : supremv' : caput"; stops a small quatrefoil; *rev.* as *obv.*, but "in" extended and "sup'mv'" contracted from supremv'.

Edward VI (1547-53). (i, A.D. 1547) As last. (ii, A.D. 1548-53) Size  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Edward' · sext' · Dei · gr'a · Anglie · Franc' · et Hibernie · Rex · Fidei · Defes' · et in tr'a · ecclesie · Anglicane et Hib'nie · sup'mv' capvt"; *rev.* "Edward' sext' Dei gra · Anglie Franc' · et · Hib'nie · ex Fidei Defes' et in terra · ecclesie · Anglicane · et Hibirnie · supremv' · caput."

Mary I (1553-54). (i) As last. (ii) Size 5 in. (A.D. 1554-56) *obv.* "Maria D. G. Anglie Francie et Hibernie Regina eivs Nominis prima Fidei defensor"; *rev.* as *obv.*

Philip and Mary (1554-58.) (i) As last. (ii) *obv.* "Philip<sup>o</sup> et Maria D' G' Rex et Regina Angl' Hispaniar' Franc' Utriusq' Sicilie Ierusalem et Hib' Fidei Defensor"; *rev.* "Archiduces Austrie Duces Burgundie Mediolani et Brabancie comites Haspurgi Flandrie et Tivolis."

Elizabeth (1558-1603). (i, 1558-85) Size  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Elizabeth Dei gracia Anglie Francie et Hibernie Regina Fidei Defensor"; *rev.* as *obv.*; motto on *obv.*, "Pulchrum · pro · patria · pati." (ii, A.D. 1586-1603) Size  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in.; "Elizabetha Dei gracia Anglie Francie et Hibernie Regina Fidei Defensor"; the stops on the *rev.* are ten roundles.



James I (1603-25). (i, 1603-5) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Iacobvs Dei gracia Angliæ Scotiæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ Rex Fidei Defensor"; stops are roses; *rev.* as *obv.* (ii, 1605-25) As last.

Charles I (1625-49). (i, 1625-26) As last. (ii, 1626-27) "Carolvs Dei gratia Magnæ Britanniæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ Rex. Fid.' Def.' &c."; the stops are stars; *rev.* as *obv.* (iii, A.D. 1627-40) "Carolus Dei gratia Angliæ Scotiæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ Rex Fidei Defensor"; the stops are small roses; *rev.* as *obv.* (iv, 1640-44) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Carolus Dei gratia Magnæ Britanniæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ Rex Fidei Defensor"; the stops are roses; *rev.* as *obv.* (v) As (iv).

Commonwealth (1649-52). (i) Size  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in.; "The · great · Seale · of · England · 1648"; *rev.* "in · the · first · yeare · of · Freedom · by · God's · blessing · restored 1648." (ii, A.D. 1648) As last, but with substitution of date "1651" and "third" for "first yeare."

Oliver Cromwell, Protector (1652-59). Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; *obv.* "Magnvm · sigllvm · Reipvb · Angliæ · Scotiæ · et Hiberniæ · &c."; *rev.* "Olivarivs · Dei · gra · Reip · Angliæ · Scotiæ · et · Hiberniæ · &ct · Protector"; on a label upon the *obv.* "Pax quaritur Bello."

Richard Cromwell, Protector (1658-60). (i) As last. (ii, 1659-60) As last, but word "Reip." replaced by "Republiæ."

Charles II (1649-85). (i, 1649-53) Unknown. (ii, 1653-64?) "Carolvs II. Dei gratia Magnæ Britanniæ . Franciæ . et Hiber . Rex . Fidei . Defensor"; on the *rev.* the word "Hiber" is extended to "Hiberniæ." (iii, A.D. 1664-74) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Carolvs : ii . Dei . gra . Mag . Britan . Fran . et . Hib . Rex . Fid . Defensor."; on the *rev.* all words but "Mag." are extended. (iv, A.D. 1674-85) Size 6 in.; "Carolvs . Secvndvs . d' gra . Mag . Bri . Fra . et Hib . Rex . Fid . Defensor . &c." On the *rev.* all abbreviated words are fully extended.



James II (1685-88). Size  $5\frac{7}{8}$  in.; "Iacobvs secvndvs D gra. Mag. Bri Fran. et Hib. Rex. Fid. Defensor"; on the *rev.* the shortened words are all written in full.

William III and Mary II (1689-94). Size  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in.; "Gulielmvs III et Maria II Dei gra. Ang. Fra. et Hib. Rex et Regnia Fidei defensores."

William III (1694-1702). (i) As above. (ii) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Gulielmvs III. D. gra. Mag. Bri. Fra. et Hib. Rex Fidei Defensor &c."; *rev.* all words extended.

Anne (A.D. 1702-14). (i) As last. (ii, A.D. 1703-7) Size 6 in.; "Anna Dei gratia Magnæ Britanniae Franciæ et Hiberniæ Regnia Fid. Defensor Etc."; *rev.* the word "Defensor" shortened to "Def." (iii, A.D. 1707-14) As last, but letters in "ETC" uniform in size.

George I (A.D. 1714-27). (i, A.D. 1714) As last. (ii) Size 6 in.; "Georgivs Dei gratia Magnæ Britanniae Franciæ et Hiberniæ Rex. fidei defen."; *rev.* "Brvnswicken et Lvneburgen Dux Sacri Romani Imperi Archithesaurarivs et Princeps Elect. etc."

George II (1727-60). Size 6 in.; "Georgivs . II . Dei . gratia . Magnæ . Britanniae . Franciæ . et . Hiberniæ . Rex . Fidei . Defensor ."; *rev.* "Brvnswicken . et . Lvnebergen . Dux . Sacri . Romani . Imperii . Archithesavrarivs . et . Princeps . Elect. etc."

George III (1760-1820). (i, 1760-62) As last. (ii) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Georgivs . III . Dei . gratia . Mag . Britanniae, Franciæ . et . Hiberniæ . Rex . Fidei . Defensor ."; *rev.* as last. (iii) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; As last. (iv) Size  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in.; as before. (v) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Georgivs III . D . G . Mag . Brit . Fr . et . Hib . Rex . F . D . Brvns . et . Lun . Dux . S . R . I . A . T . et . pr . elect . etc."; *rev.* as *obv.* (vi) Size  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Georgivs . III . D . G . Britanniarvm Rex . etc." as last. (vii) Size  $5\frac{7}{8}$  in.; "Georgivs tertivs Dei gratia Britanniarum Rex Fidei Defensor"; *rev.* "Et . in . terra . Ecclesiæ . Anglicanæ . et . Hibernicæ . Supremum caput ."



George IV (1820-30). Size  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in.; "Georgius . quartus . Dei . gratia . Britanniarum . Fidei . Defensor."

William IV (1830-37) Size  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in.; "Gulielmus . Quartus . Dei . gratia . Britanniarvm Rex . Fidei . Defensor."; *rev.* as *obv.*

Victoria (1837-1901). (i) As last. (ii) Size  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in.; "Victoria . Dei gratia Britanniarvm Regnia Fidei Defensor"; *rev.* as *obv.* (iii) As last. (iv) As last. (v) Victoria dei gratia . Britt . Regina . fid def . ind . imp.

Edward VII. (i) As last of Victoria. (ii) Edwardus VII : D : G . Britt : et Terrarum Transmar : quæ indit : sunt Britt : Rex F : I : Ind : Imp :



## CHARGES BORNE IN THE ARMS OF ENGLISH DIOCESES AND DEANERIES

Canterbury . . .	A cross staff surmounted by the pallium charged with four crosses formées fitchées. On a cross the monogram I.X.
London . . .	Two swords in saltire, the hilts in base. As the see, but in chief the letter D.
Winchester . .	Two keys in bend, their rings interlaced and crossed by a sword in bend. The arms of the see, but a D in chief.
Bangor . . .	A bend guttée de poix between two molets. An abbot.
Bath and Wells.	A saltire quarterly quartered. (Wells) A saltire between the keys of St. Peter and the sword of St. Paul.
Bristol . . .	Three crowns in pale. Three open crowns.
Chichester . .	Our Lord in glory between two golden candlesticks. From His mouth proceeds a sword. Arms of the see between letters A Ω.
Ely . . .	Three crowns. Three keys erect.
Exeter . . .	A sword surmounted by two keys in saltire. A stag's head with a cross patée fitchée be- tween its horns.
Gloucester . .	Two keys in saltire. Three chevrons between ten torteaux.



- Hereford . . . Three leopards' heads jessant de lis.  
Five chevrons.
- Lichfield . . . A cross potent quadrated between four crosses  
patées.  
Arms of the see, on the cross a letter D.
- Lincoln . . . Two lions passant guardant, on a chief the  
Holy Mother.  
Arms of the see, in chief the letter D.
- Llandaff . . . Two pastoral staves in saltire, on a chief  
three mitres.
- Norwich . . . Three mitres.  
A cross.
- Oxford . . . A fess, in chief three demi-virgins crowned,  
in base an ox crossing a ford.
- Peterborough . Two keys between four crosslets fitchées.  
Two swords between four crosses patées.
- Rochester . . . On a saltire an escallop.
- St. Asaph . . . Two keys in saltire.
- St. David's . . . On a cross five cinquefoils.  
Arms of the see, but tinctures reversed.
- Salisbury . . . The Holy Mother standing crowned.  
Arms of the see, the letter D in chief.
- Worcester . . . Ten roundles.  
The arms of the see, on a canton the Holy  
Mother and Child.
- York . . . . Two keys in saltire, in chief a royal crown.  
(The ancient arms were identical with those  
of Cantérbury.)  
Two keys between, in chief a crown, in base  
three hosts.
- Durham . . . A cross between four lions rampant.  
Arms of the see, in fess point the letter D.
- Carlisle . . . On a cross a mitre.  
A cross.
- Chester . . . Three mitres.



## ARMS OF ENGLAND

### A TABLE TO ASSIST IDENTIFICATION

- 1154-1340. Gules, three lions passant guardant, gold.
- 1340-1405. Quarterly : France Ancient, viz : azure ; semé de lis, gold, quartering the last.
- 1377-1399. Richard II. Azure, a cross patonce between five martlets, gold, impaling the last quartered coat.
- 1405-1603. Henry IV-Elizabeth. Quarterly : France Modern and England, viz : azure, three fleurs-de-lis, gold, quartering gules, three lions passant guardant, gold.
- 1603-1688. Quarterly : in the first and fourth quarters, the arms as last used ; in the second quarter, gold, a lion within a double tressure flory, gules, for Scotland ; and third, azure, a harp, gold, for Ireland.
- 1689-1694. William III and Mary II. On the dexter, as last, but the arms of Scotland dimidiated ; over all, the escutcheon of Orange, azure, semé of billets, a lion, gold. All impaling the same, but without the escutcheon of pretence.
- 1694-1702. William III. As the dexter of last.
- 1702-1714. Anne. Quarterly : (i and iv) England and the dimidiated coat of Scotland impaled ; (ii) France Modern ; (iii) Ireland.
- 1714-1801. As Anne, but in the fourth quarter tierced in pairle : (i) gules, two lions passant guardant, gold, for Brunswick ; (ii) gold, semé of hearts, gules, a lion, azure, for Luneburg ; (iii) gules, a horse, silver, for Westphalia ; over all, gules, the crown of Charlemagne for electoral dignity.



- 1801-1837. Quarterly : (i and iv) England ; (ii) Scotland ; (iii) Ireland. In pretence, Brunswick, Luneberg, and Westphalia, surmounted by a crown, or.
- 1837-1904. As last, but without the Hanoverian escutcheon.

## SUPPORTERS USED BY ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

- Edward III . A golden lion and silver falcon.
- Richard II . Two white harts.
- Henry IV . Two white swans holding ostrich feathers in their beaks.  
Antelope and swan of Bohun.  
A golden lion and white antelope.
- Henry V . . As last.
- Henry VI . Two antelopes for Bohun.  
Lion and antelope.  
Lion and heraldic tiger.
- Edward IV . Lion and the black bull of Clare.  
Two silver lions for March.
- Edward V . The white lion and white hart.
- Richard III . Two silver boars.  
The lion and boar.
- Henry VII . The dragon, gules, of Wales. A silver greyhound for Beaufort.  
Lion and dragon.  
Two silver greyhounds.
- Henry VIII . Lion and dragon.  
Antelope and stag.  
Dragon and greyhound.  
Two greyhounds.
- Edward VI . Lion and dragon.  
Lion and greyhound.
- Mary . . . Lion and greyhound.  
Lion and golden dragon.



Elizabeth . . Dragon and greyhound.

Heraldic antelope and stag.

After this date the usual supporters are the lion and unicorn.

James I . . Griffin and greyhound.

<sup>1</sup> Lion with banner with a cross patonce. Unicorn  
with a banner and the arms of St. Edward.

Charles I . . Antelope and stag, both gorged and chained.  
Dragon and heraldic antelope.

Charles II . . Griffin and greyhound.

James II . . Two greyhounds, each holding an ostrich feather.

Anne . . . Lion and greyhound.

George I . . Griffin and greyhound.

<sup>1</sup> Many other great seals have the supporters holding banners on which the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew appear.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Albe.* The long white tunic of a priest, reaching to the feet, and worn at Mass.
- Amice.* A linen handkerchief worn about a priest's neck at Mass.
- Amorini.* Figures in the nude, usually of cupids. A common ornament in Renaissance architecture.
- Bardings.* The foot-cloth of a horse, usually embroidered with badges or the owner's arms.
- Brassarts.* Plates of metal protecting the arms.
- Bulla.* A seal of metal used by popes, the emperors of the East, some Eastern patriarchs, and by the Knights Hospitallers. Both matrix and impression, as also the instrument to which the seal is affixed, are so called.
- Capeline.* See *Lambrequin*.
- Champfrou.* The protective armour of a horse's head.
- Close Rolls.* Rolls at the Public Record Office containing copies of instruments issued by the sovereign, closed or sealed, as not concerning any save those to whom addressed.
- Coudières.* Protective jointed plate armour for the elbow.
- Cross moline.* A cross with arms of equal length, terminating as in the iron centre of a millstone.
- Cross pattée.* A cross formed of four triangles joined at the point.
- Couché.* In the shield, applied when it is leaning to one side.
- Cuir bouilli.* The material of prepared leather of which the helm crest was made.
- Cuisses.* In armour, protective plates for the thigh.
- Dalmatic.* A short coat with large sleeves worn by the sovereign at his coronation ; also a sleeveless vestment worn by the deacon in certain Church ceremonies.



- Demi-brassarts.* Protective plates of armour for the arms.
- Droit.* Applied to the shield when placed in its normal upright position.
- Ecu-à-bouche.* A shaped shield with a small portion cut out on the right hand to serve as a lance rest.
- En ogive.* See *Vesica*.
- Genouillères.* Caps of metal or leather to defend the knees.
- Gnostic.* An early sect of heretics of mysterious character and widespread influence.
- Hauberk.* A shirt of mail.
- Jambs.* Defensive plates of armour for the legs.
- Lambrequin.* A handkerchief of linen twined round the helm to prevent its heating in the sun. The modern crest wreath is its inartistic survival.
- Land-book.* A deed securing to a religious house the land booked to it by a sovereign.
- Majesty.* A representation of the Holy Trinity.
- Manus Dei.* A figure indicating benediction, viz. the hand and arm of the Almighty Father issuing from a cloud of glory.
- Mask.* In heraldry, a face.
- Matrix.* The die of metal or other material from which the impression of a seal is made.
- Morse.* A brooch.
- Occularium.* The slit in a helm for eyesight.
- Obverse.* The front or uppermost side of a seal.
- Patent Rolls.* Rolls at the Public Record Office containing mandates from the king of general interest, and hence delivered open or unsealed.
- Panache.* A plume of feathers worn on the helm.
- Penché.* See *Couché*.
- Penitentiarius.* A confessor.
- Precentor.* The chief of the singing men in a cathedral, one responsible for their government.
- Predella.* The platform upon which the altar stands.
- Prick-spur.* A spur without a rowel.
- Quillons.* The guards of a sword handle.



- Rosace.* An ornament in Gothic architecture formed by interlaced half-circles cusped.
- Rose-en-soleil.* A royal badge representing the Tudor rose in the centre of a sun of glory.
- Reverse.* The under side or back of a seal.
- Sollerets à la poulaine.* A defence of flexible metal plates for the feet.
- Succentor.* The principal singer after the precentor, and leader of the left side of the choir.
- Swags.* Festoons of flowers and foliage used in the Renaissance style.
- Tabard.* A short-sleeved coat, usually embroidered in front and upon the shoulders with the owner's arms.
- Tunicle.* A sleeveless vestment of silk worn by sub-deacons.
- Vesica piscis.* A pointed oval figure representing an aureole or glory, common in Gothic architectural combinations.
- Volute.* The spiral ornament at the corners of the Ionic and Corinthian capital.







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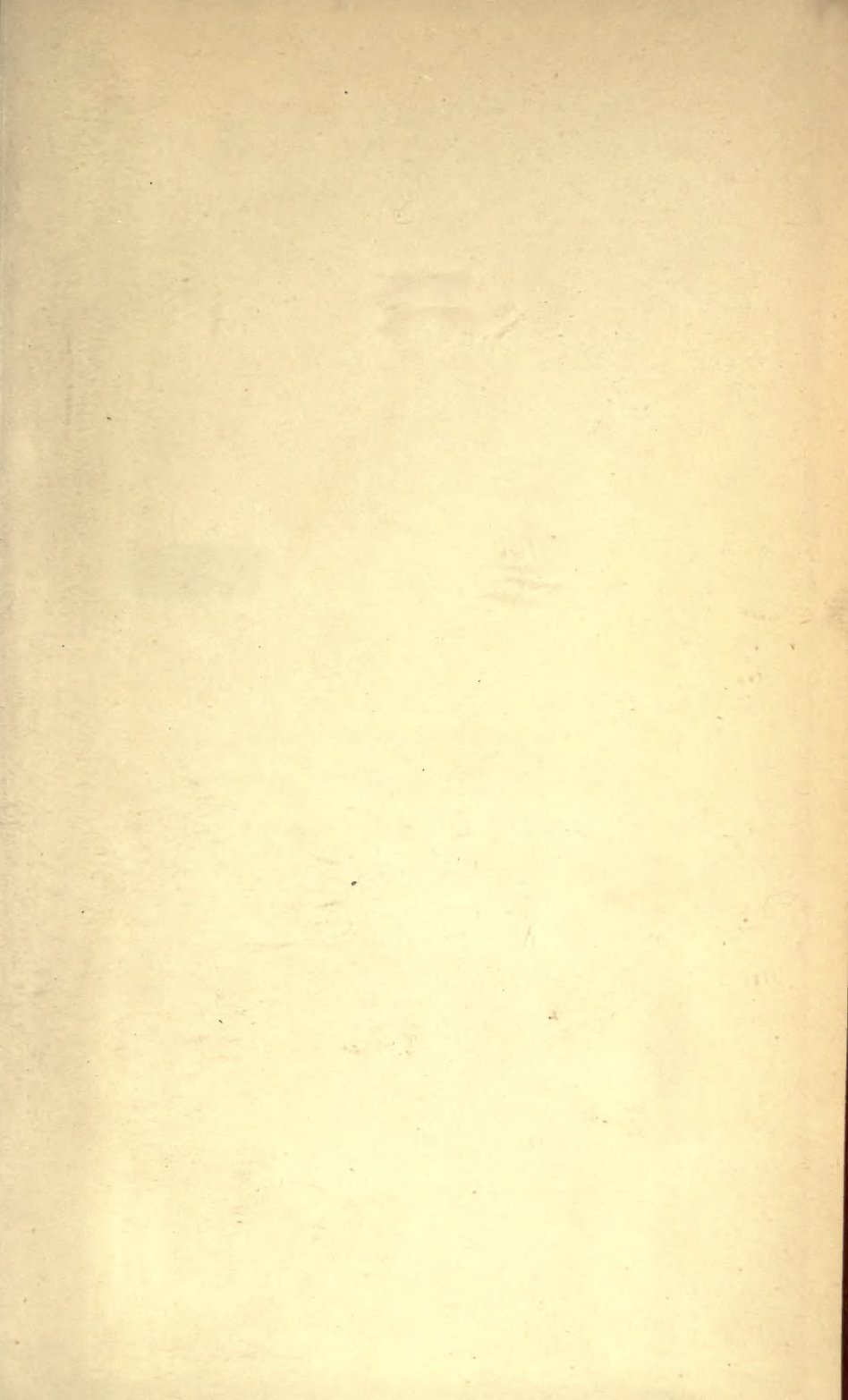
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